

Brāhmaṇa and Vaiṣṇava

The conclusive comparison between *brāhmaṇas* and *Vaiṣṇavas*

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Prakṛti-jana-kāṇḍa Section Concerning Worldly People

The pure tracts of land known as Āryāvarta and Dakṣiṇāṭya, which have existed since time immemorial and which stretch from the eastern ocean to the western ocean and from the Himālaya Mountains in the North down to the abode of the demons in the South, are presently known as Bhārata-varṣa, or India. Being known since time immemorial as *karma-kṣetra*, or the field of fruitive activities, this Bhārata-varṣa is the land of various activities of innumerable expert fruitive workers. Sometimes the skies of Bharata-varṣa are saturated with the ṛṣis' chanting of hymns from the *Vedas* and the smoke emanating from the sacrificial fires, sometimes the land of Bhārata-varṣa is soaked with blood from battles between the demigods and demons, sometimes the demons are destroyed by the wonderful prowess of incarnations of the Supreme Lord, sometimes philosophers debate, poets compose sweet verses, scientists display extraordinary expertise—foreigners are astonished on seeing these social and cultural arrangements—in this way various scenes appear in one's heart while reflecting on the land of Bhārata. In all these scenes we can see one community as the principle hero; that is the community of *brāhmaṇas*. The creator of this universe is Lord Brahmā; so those who are born from his head, his principle limb, into the field of fruitive activities, those foremost sons and their descendants accepted the designation of *brāhmaṇa* and thus spread his glories. Even today in India the glories of the *brāhmaṇas* are accepted as truth by men and women, from childhood to old age. From time immemorial the prestige of the *brāhmaṇas* has surpassed all opposition and remained intact. Many historical incidents support this fact. All Sanskrit literatures proclaim the glories of the *brāhmaṇas*. It is stated in the *Mahābhārata* (*Vana-parva*, Chapter 206):

indro 'py eṣāṁ praṇamate	kiṁ punar mānavo bhuvi
brāhmaṇā hy agni-saḍṛṣā	daheyuḥ pṛthivīm api
apeyaḥ sāgaraḥ krodhāt	kṛto hi lavaṇodakah
yeṣāṁ krodhāgnir adyāpi	daṇḍake nopaśāmyati
bahu prabhāvāḥ śrūyante	brāhmaṇānām mahātmanām

“Even Indra, the King of the demigods, offers obeisances to the *brāhmaṇas*, so what can be said of the people of earth? The *brāhmaṇas* are as powerful as fire; if they want they can burn the entire world to ashes. The water of the ocean is salty and therefore undrinkable due to the anger of the *brāhmaṇas*. The fire in the Daṇḍakāraṇya forest started by the *brāhmaṇas*' anger cannot be extinguished even today. Many similar glories of the pious *brāhmaṇas* are heard.” A compiler of *Dharma-śāstras*, Viṣṇu (19.20-23), has stated:

*devāḥ parokṣa-devāḥ. pratyakṣa-devāḥ brahmaṇāḥ.
brāhmaṇair lokā dhāryante.*

*brāhmaṇānām prasādena divi tiṣṭhanti devatāḥ
brāhmaṇābhīhitam vākyaṁ na mithyā jāyate kvacit*

*yad brāhmaṇās tuṣṭatamā vadanti tad devatāḥ pratyabhinandayanti
tuṣṭeṣu tuṣṭāḥ satatam bhavanti pratyakṣa-deveṣu parokṣa-devāḥ*

“The demigods are not seen by gross senses. The *brāhmaṇas* are manifestations of the demigods. The *brāhmaṇas* sustain all the planets. The demigods reside in the heavenly planets by the mercy of the *brāhmaṇas*. The *brāhmaṇas*' words can never be false. Whatever the *brāhmaṇas* speak in great satisfaction is accepted by the demigods. When the manifested forms of the demigods, the *brāhmaṇas*, are satisfied, the demigods, who are beyond sense perception, are also satisfied.” Another compiler of *Dharma-śāstras*, Bṛhaspati (49, 50, 52), has stated:

*śastram ekākinam hanti vipra-manyuḥ kula-kṣayam
cakrāt tīvra-taro manyus tasmād vipram na kopayet
rājā dahati daṇḍena vipro dahati manyunā*

“A weapon can destroy only one person, but the anger of a *brāhmaṇa* can destroy one's entire family. The anger of a *brāhmaṇa* is more fiercely powerful than a disc, so one should not make a *brāhmaṇa* angry. A king burns through his punishment, while a *brāhmaṇa* burns through his anger.”

Other compilers of *Dharma-śāstras*, Parāśara (6.60, 61) and Śātātapa (1.27, 30), have stated:

*brāhmaṇā yāni bhāṣante bhāṣante tāni devatāḥ
sarva-deva-mayā viprā na tad vacanam anyathā
brāhmaṇā jaṅgamam tīrthām nirjanam sarva-kāmadam
teṣām vākyaodakenaiva śudhyanti malinā janāḥ*

“Whatever the *brāhmaṇas* speak, those are the words of the demigods. The *brāhmaṇas* are the manifestation of all the demigods. Their words never prove false. The *brāhmaṇas* are moving secluded holy places that fulfill all desires. Sinful persons are purified by the pure as water words of the *brāhmaṇas*.” A compiler of *Dharma-śāstras*, Vyāsa (4.9, 10, 54), has stated:

*brāhmaṇāt paramam tīrtham na bhūtam na bhaviṣyati
yat phalam kapilādāne kārtikyām jyestha-puṣkare*

tat phalaṁ ṛṣayaḥ śreṣṭhā viprāṇāṁ pāda-śaucane

vipra-pādodaka-klinnā yāvat tiṣṭhati medinī
tāvat puṣkara-pātreṣu pibanti pitaro 'mṛtam

yasya dehe sadāśnanti havyāni tri-divaukasah
kavyāni caiva pitarah kim bhūtam adhikaṁ tataḥ

“There is no other, nor will there be, a superior holy place than a *brāhmaṇa*. O best of the sages, simply by honoring the water that has washed the feet of a *brāhmaṇa* one achieves the same result that one attains by donating a brown cow on the full-moon day of Kārtika. As long as the earth is moistened by the water that has washed a *brāhmaṇa*'s feet, the forefathers will drink nectar from lotus vessels. Through the body of a *brāhmaṇa*, the demigods, though living in heaven, always eat *havya* offerings and the forefathers in Pitṛloka always eat *kavya* offerings, so who can be superior to such *brāhmaṇas*?” In the Bhārgaviya *Manu-saṁhitā* (1.93, 94, 96, 99-101) it is stated:

sarvasyaivāsya sargasya dharmato brāhmaṇaḥ prabhuḥ

havya-kavyābhivāhyāya sarvasyāsya ca guptaye

buddhimatsu narāḥ śreṣṭhā nareṣu brāhmaṇāḥ smṛtāḥ

brāhmaṇo jāyamāno hi pṛthivyām adhijāyate
īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānām dharma-kośasya guptaye

sarvaṁ svaṁ brāhmaṇasyedaṁ yat kiñcij jagatī-gatam
śraiṣṭhyenābhijanenedaṁ sarvaṁ vai brāhmaṇo 'rhati

svam eva brāhmaṇo bhuñkte svaṁ vaste svaṁ dadāti ca
ānṛśamsyād brāhmaṇasya bhuñjate hītare janāḥ

“The *brāhmaṇas* have become the lords of the entire creation through their religious counsel. The *brāhmaṇas* were born in order to receive *havya* and *kavya* offerings on behalf of the demigods and forefathers. Among those with developed intelligence, the human beings are the highest. Among the human beings, the *brāhmaṇas* are the highest. As soon as they are born, the *brāhmaṇas* assume the topmost position in this world, and in order to protect religious principles they become the lords of all living entities. All the wealth of this world belongs to the *brāhmaṇas*. Due to their high birth, the *brāhmaṇas* are meant to receive all sorts of wealth. Whatever foods a *brāhmaṇa* accepts from others, whatever clothes he accepts from others, whatever items he accepts from others, and whatever items he gives in charity in fact belong to him. Only by his mercy can other people enjoy these things.” Śrī Parāśara (8.32) further says:

duḥśīlo 'pi dvijaḥ pūjyo na śūdro vijitendriyaḥ
kaḥ parityajya duṣṭāṁ gām duhec chīlavatīm kharīm

“Even if a respectable *brāhmaṇa* who has undergone all reformatory processes is sinful, he should still be worshiped. A self-controlled *śūdra* who is always lamenting, however, should never be worshiped. Who will reject an ill-natured

cow to milk a well-behaved she-ass?” Forsaking the Vedic way of life can never be compared with the godless, ever-lamenting, averse to the *Vedas* state of the *śūdras*. The prestige of the *brāhmaṇas* is seen throughout the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Purāṇas*, and the *Tantras*. Religious-minded people always carefully protect the prestigious position of the *brāhmaṇas*. In fact throughout the four *yugas*, religious-minded people of India have neither disrespected nor considered that others should disrespect the *brāhmaṇas*. In a place where proper respect for each of the *varṇas* is found in social dealings, each *varṇa* displays its own greatness by endeavoring to increase the prestigious position of the *brāhmaṇas*.

All *brāhmaṇas* are superior to, the protectors of, and more powerful than the demigods, the other castes headed by the *kṣatriyas*, the animals, the birds, the reptiles, and the plants. Due to their sharp intelligence they are capable of acquiring all kinds of knowledge and are exclusively qualified to impart knowledge to others. By virtue of their keen intelligence, they are worshipers of the demigods, they are respectful to the *kṣatriyas*, they are the well-wishers of the *vaiśyas*, *śūdras*, *antyajas*, and *mlecchas*, and they assist in the worship of the demigods. On the strength of their renunciation, they are unattached to their assets, they earn their livelihood by begging, and they give their surplus in charity. Those who have accepted the Āryan way of life in India—the followers of the *Vedas*, the *smārtas*, the followers of the *Purāṇas*, the followers of the *Tantras*—all offer respects to the *brāhmaṇas*. The *brāhmaṇas* are the only masters and experts in executing the three types of rituals. Animals and persons other than *brāhmaṇas* are naturally obliged to these persons who are endowed with such influence. We are unable to understand who would not desire the mercy of personalities who have such authority, respect from the demigods, and omnipotency. Not only the Āryans, but every Indian; not only the Indians, but the people of the entire world; not only the people, but all living entities; not only the living entities, but even the inanimate world— all should more or less know the uncommon power and influence of the *brāhmaṇas* and thus certainly consider them to be in the topmost position. The statements of Vaiṣṇava literatures, the far-sighted teachings of sages who are adorned with varieties of knowledge and transcendental opulences, and the unwavering faith of perceptive Indians who respect the scriptures cannot be considered by us as simply encouragement for the wild dancing of useless gossipers.

If one studies the statements of the scriptures of India regarding the prestigious position of the *brāhmaṇas* with a narrow mind, then all the expected conclusions will turn into churning waves within the ocean of arguments. Such heaps of biased arguments are not pleasing to the ears of opposing thinkers; they only promote the interest of the propounder. The esteemed logicians who maintain such ideas soon fall from their own self-interest and display their narrow sectarian spirit by disrespecting impartiality. Such logicians go to England, Japan, Germany, or America but are unable to attract the faith of intelligent people of those countries in their biased interpretations of the scriptures. If they give up their self-interest and consider things impartially, however, then the deep meaning of the scriptures' purports will easily be revealed in their hearts. In brief, we can say that things in general are perceived as auspicious or inauspicious when seen by swanlike or asslike people respectively; such distinctions of auspicious and inauspicious are the result of these person's language and mentality. As far as we are concerned, we

are not busy in simply carrying the load of the scriptures, rather we are on the front line of accepting their essence. I cannot say whether those who have given up the path of reasoning and foolishly accepted carrying the load as the goal will be happy by our presentation.

If we want to analyze who is actually such an influential *brāhmaṇa*, we can find in Manu's *Dharma-śāstra* that in the beginning of creation the universe we now see was devoid of characteristics, invisible, and full of darkness. Thereafter the self-manifest Lord agitated the *mahā-bhūtas* and other material elements and entered within in order to illuminate this unmanifest universe. Lord Nārāyaṇa first created water, and with a desire to produce various progeny from His own body He then placed His seed in it. From His seed a golden egg as brilliant as a thousand suns appeared. Lord Brahmā, the creator of all the worlds, was born from that egg. In order to increase the population of all planets, *brāhmaṇas* were born from the mouth of Brahmā, *kṣatriyas* were born from his arms, *vaiśyas* were born from his thighs, and *śūdras* were born from his feet. Thus the four *varṇas* were created. This is explained in the first chapter (5, 6, 8, 9, 31) of Manu's *Dharma-śāstra* as follows:

<i>āsīd idam tamo-bhūtam</i>	<i>aprajñātam alakṣaṇam</i>
<i>tataḥ svayambhūr bhagavān</i>	<i>avyakto vyañjayan idam</i>
<i>mahābhūtādi vṛttaujāḥ</i>	<i>pradurāsīt tamo-nudaḥ</i>
<i>so 'bhidyāya śarīrāt svāt</i>	<i>sisṛkṣur vividhāḥ prajāḥ</i>
<i>apa eva sasarjādaḥ</i>	<i>tāsu bījam avāsṛjat</i>
<i>tad aṇḍam abhavad dhaimaṁ</i>	<i>sahasrāmśu-sama-prabham</i>
<i>tasmin jajñe svayaṁ brahmā</i>	<i>sarva-loka-pitāmahaḥ</i>
<i>lokānāṁ tu vivṛddhy-arthaṁ</i>	<i>mukha-bāhūru-pādātāḥ</i>
<i>brāhmaṇaṁ kṣatriyaṁ vaiśyaṁ</i>	<i>śūdraṁ ca niravartayat</i>

In the *Ṛg-pariśiṣṭa* it is stated:

<i>brāhmaṇo 'sya mukham āsīd</i>	<i>bāhū rājanyaḥ kṛtāḥ</i>
<i>ūrū tad asya yad vaiśyaḥ</i>	<i>padbhyāṁ śūdro 'jāyata</i>

“The *brāhmaṇa* appeared from his face, the royal class from his arms, the *vaiśya* from his thighs, and the *śūdra* was born from his feet.”

A compiler of *Dharma-śāstras*, Hārīta (1.12, 15), has stated:

<i>yajña-siddhy-arthaṁ anaghān</i>	<i>brāhmaṇān mukhato 'sṛjat</i>
<i>brāhmaṇyām brāhmaṇenaivam</i>	<i>utpanno brāhmaṇaḥ smṛtaḥ</i>

“From the mouth the sinless *brāhmaṇas* were created for the purpose of performing sacrifices. The child born of a *brāhmaṇa* in the womb of his *brāhmaṇa* wife is known as a *brāhmaṇa*.” Yājñavalkya (1.90) has stated:

<i>savarṇebhyaḥ savarṇāsu</i>	<i>jāyante vai sva-jātayaḥ</i>
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“When men of the various castes headed by the *brāhmaṇas* produce children in the wombs of their wives belonging respectively to the same caste, their sons attain the same caste as their fathers.”

When intercaste marriages first became current, the sons born from *brāhmaṇas* in

the womb of either a *kṣatriya* or *vaiśya* woman were also accepted as *brāhmaṇas*.

brāhmaṇyām brāhmaṇāj jāto *brāhmaṇaḥ syān na saṁśayaḥ*
kṣatriyāyām tathaiva syāt *vaiśyāyām api caiva hi*

“The son born of a *brāhmaṇa* in the womb of a *brāhmaṇa* woman is undoubtably a *brāhmaṇa*, and the son born of a *brāhmaṇa* in the womb of a *kṣatriya* or *vaiśya* woman is also a *brāhmaṇa*.” But medieval *smārtas* such as Kulluka, a commentator on the *Manu-saṁhitā*, and Vijñāneśvara, the author of the *Mitākṣara*, consider that these intercaste children belong to the caste of their mothers. In the *Manu-saṁhitā* (10.6) it is stated:

strīṣv anantara-jātāsu *dvijair utpāditān sutān*
sadrśān eva tān āhur *mātr-doṣa-vigarhitān*

“Sons begotten in the wombs of women belonging to castes lower than that of the father are considered as similar to the father but contaminated due to their mothers' inferior position.” In the opinion of some commentators like Kulluka, the caste status of such sons is inferior to that of their fathers and superior to that of their mothers. In some places these sons are given designations like *mūrdhābhiṣikta*. It is stated in the *Manu-saṁhitā* (10.41) as follows:

viprasya triṣu varṇeṣu *nṛpater varṇayor dvayor*
vaiśyasya varṇe caikasmin *ṣaḍ ete 'pasadāḥ smṛtāḥ*

sajāti-jān antara-jāḥ *ṣaṭ sutā dvija-dharmināḥ*
śūdrāṇām tu sadharmāṇaḥ *sarve 'padhvaṁsa-jāḥ smṛtāḥ*

“Children born from a *brāhmaṇa* father and a *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*, or *śūdra* mother; from a *kṣatriya* father and a *vaiśya* or *śūdra* mother; and from a *vaiśya* father and a *śūdra* mother—these six are inferior to the children born of parents belonging to the same caste.”

Sons born of *brāhmaṇa* parents, sons born of *kṣatriya* parents, and sons born of *vaiśya* parents, as well as sons born from *brāhmaṇa* father and either *kṣatriya* or *vaiśya* mother and sons born of *kṣatriya* father and *vaiśya* mother are all considered among the *dvijas*, or twice-born. They are therefore all eligible for accepting the sacred thread and the other brahminical *saṁskāras*. Those *sūtas*, *māgadhas*, and others who are born through *pratiloma* marriages involving the twice-born classes, such as *śūdra* father with *brāhmaṇa* mother, *vaiśya* father with *brāhmaṇa* mother, or *kṣatriya* father with *brāhmaṇa* mother, *śūdra* father with *kṣatriya* mother, *śūdra* father with *vaiśya* mother, and *vaiśya* father with *kṣatriya* mother, are all considered *śūdras* and therefore do not undergo the sacred thread ceremony.

When the sages who compiled the twenty *Dharma-śāstras* assisted the kings in controlling and maintaining human society, they directed society in following the path of ritualistic fruitive activities. The compilers of the *Purāṇas* also recorded the customs and activities of those times. The methods found in the *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* for ascertaining who was a *brāhmaṇa* are often more or less the same as those found in the *Dharma-śāstras*. Although the *Dharma-śāstras* are composed of rules and regulations, how those rules and regulations were followed in practice and respected by the people of this world has been described by the learned writers of the *Itihāsas* in the course of their describing historical events. In ancient times

the activities of the *varṇas* were determined in different provinces by the various textbooks of practical application of rituals belonging to the different branches of the *Vedas*. That is why the behavior of a family in one region was different from that of a family in another region.

Textbooks of practical application like the *Aśvalāyana-gr̥hya-sūtras* and *Śāṅkhāyana-śrauta-sūtras* among the *Ṛg Veda* branches, the *Lāṭyāyana-śrauta-sūtras* and *Gobhiliya-gr̥hya-sūtras* of the *Sāma Veda* branches, the *Kātyāyana-śrauta-sūtras* and *Pāraskariya-gr̥hya-sūtras* of the *Śukla-yajur Veda* branches, and the *Āpastambīya-śrauta-sūtras* of the *Kṛṣṇa-yajur Veda* branches, as well as the *Kauṣītaka-sūtras* of the *Atharva Veda* branches were more or less mastered under the support of kings by the sages who compiled the twenty *Dharma-śāstras*.

Moreover, the rules and regulations of a particular *Dharma-śāstra* were followed according to the particular place. In the opinion of some persons, at the beginning of the Kali age the *Manu Dharma-śāstra* and the doctrine of Parāśara Muni were prominently accepted, while the other twenty *Dharma-śāstras* were neglected.

Others say that the doctrine of Hārīta was prominent and the activities prescribed by the other *Dharma-śāstras* were neglected. Generally, whatever one found convenient was accepted, without regard for other's consent and liking.

In the medieval age, many new *smṛtis* were compiled on the basis of the *Dharma-śāstras* in various parts of the country. Sometimes people gave special credence to certain parts of the *Dharma-śāstra* lawbooks to suit their own taste, and sometimes they neglected the main purpose of the *Dharma-śāstras* by rejecting those portions that did not suit their taste. Those who are conversant with various scriptures can often see this from their study of various books. When the ritualistic *smṛti-śāstras* are effective for a particular person, in a particular place, at a particular time, then that particular person at that particular place and time has a high regard for those scriptures. But we cannot say whether this same regard was felt or accepted by other persons in other places and times.

One cannot expect that the ritualistic *smṛti-śāstras* will be fully honored by all persons, at all places, and at all times. At those times, in those places, and for those persons for which ritualistic practices are prominent and the topics of *jñāna* and *bhakti* were not respected, are not respected, and will not be respected, any conduct other than that prescribed in the *smṛti-śāstras* have certainly been neglected, are being neglected, and will be neglected. Evidence from the many Vedic *sūtras*, the twenty *Dharma-śāstras*, the *Purāṇas*, the *Itihāsas*, the *Yāmala*s, the *Pañcarātras*, and the *Tantras* is found in the writings of the learned compilers of *smṛti-śāstras* of our country, Raghunandana Bhaṭṭācārya and Kamalākara.

Mādhava's *Kāla-mādhava*, Kamalākara's *Nirṇaya-sindhu*, Caṇḍeśvara's *Vivāda-ratnākara*, Vācaspati's *Vivāda-cintāmaṇi*, Jīmūtavūhana's *Dāya-bhāga* and *Kāla-viveka*, Halāyudha's *Brāhmaṇa-sarvasva*, Śūlapāṇi's *Prāyaścitta-viveka*, Chalāri Nṛsiṃhācārya's *Smṛty-artha-sāgara*, Ānanda Tīrtha's *Sad-ācāra-smṛti*, Nimbāditya's *Surendra-dharma-mañjarī*, Kṛṣṇadeva's *Nṛsiṃha-paricaryā* and *Rāmārcana-candrika*—in all these digests differences of opinions due to different tastes are found. Whatever opinion the author nourishes has been supported by those statements of previous sages that suit their taste.

In regards to a *brāhmaṇa*'s qualification by birth: in the *Anuśāsana-parva* of the *Mahābhārata* and in other scriptures, the *apasadas*, *anulomajas*, *mūrdhābhiṣiktas*, and *ambasṭhas* are specifically accepted as authorised *brāhmaṇas*. In many parts of

India the sons of *apasadas*, *mūrdhābhīṣiktas*, and *ambaṣṭhas* are known as *brāhmaṇas* and considered equal to those born in strict brahminical lineage. In some parts of India, however, they are rejected and not included amongst the *brāhmaṇas*. If one studies the *Samhitās* and certain other parts of the *Vedas*, the reader will obtain a clear impression that the overall message of the *Vedas* is the path of fruitive activities. But if one studies texts like the *Upaniṣads*, which are the “head” of the *Vedas*, then one will certainly receive the impression that the science of self-realization is superior, and consequently the path of fruitive activities will appear less important. Moreover, there are two tendencies among the readers of the *Upaniṣads*. Some, with a desire to enhance their knowledge of the self, take help from fruitive activities in order to attain the contrary mentality of monism, in which they ultimately give up all activities and practice renunciation. Others, who neither accept nor reject the fruitive activities of this world, neither accept the help of *karma-kāṇḍa* nor the philosophy of *jñāna-kāṇḍa*, rather they realize that the Truth established in the *Vedas* is full of spiritual variegatedness, and thus they engage in His devotional service. A certain great soul who understood that religious persons belong to three categories expressed his understanding in the following verse, quoted by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in his *Śrī Padyāvalī*:

karmāvalambakāḥ kecit kecij jñānāvalambakāḥ
vayaṁ tu hari-dāsānām pāda-trāṇāvalambakāḥ

“Among religious-minded people, some follow the path of fruitive activities and some follow the path of mental speculation, but our only resort is to carry the shoes of Lord Hari's servants.” Karma and *jñāna* are two branches of the Vedic tree. Those who have taken shelter of these two branches have certainly fallen from the standard of pure devotional service. Pure devotional service is the topmost ripened fruit of the Vedic tree. In the field of fruitive activities all people are bound by the fruits of their actions. Although one is freed from bondage to the fruits of karma by the process of *jñāna*, until one takes to pure devotional service he remains bound by the fruits of his karma. Therefore the *jñānīs* are by their own identification bound in fruitive activities. The *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (3.23.56) says:

neha yat karma dharmāya na virāgāya kalpate
na tīrtha-pada-sevāyai jīvaṁ api mṛto hi saḥ

“Anyone whose work is not meant to elevate him to religious life, anyone whose religious ritualistic performances do not raise him to renunciation, and anyone situated in renunciation that does not lead him to devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, must be considered dead, although he is breathing.” People engage in fruitive activities according to their own desires. These activities are divided into four categories—*akarma*, or actions without fruitive reactions, *vikarma*, or unauthorized or sinful work, *kukarma*, or acts against the principles of religion, and *sat-karma*, or pious activities. From the mundane point of view, those activities that are in the mode of goodness, or that are moral and beneficial for others, are called *sat-karma*. If one's activities are meant only for fulfilling one's own desires and do not benefit others, they cannot be called *sat-karma*. Those who give up sinful activities, which harm the performer and others, and engage in activities that are not meant for the pleasure of Lord Viṣṇu are actually dead, although breathing. Everyone who is on the platform of fruitive activities should execute his own duties for the purpose of *dharma*. But if

one does not engage in all his religious duties for the purpose of developing renunciation, they simply generate ignorance. When a person becomes overly proud of being situated in the mode of goodness, then he gives up pious activities and again becomes attached to activities in the modes of passion and ignorance. The perfection of knowledge is to destroy ignorance by passion, to destroy passion by goodness, and to become detached from goodness by pure goodness. This state is called *nirguṇa*, or transcendental to the material modes of nature. Without attaining the state of *nirguṇa*, a life of renunciation nourished by ignorance is as good as death. Therefore a person who has acquired knowledge takes shelter of the service of the Supreme Lord, at whose feet are found all the holy places. In other words, he takes shelter of the activities of *bhakti*. This is the symptom of real life in a living entity. When one surpasses whimsical, unregulated activities, he comes to the level of regulated, pious activities. When he further advances from pious activities, he comes to the level of knowledge, or renunciation, wherein he gives up activities. When a person loses interest in the paths of karma and *jñāna*, he comes to the path of *bhakti*, which is the highest development of human consciousness. In the pure devotional path there is no scope for fruitive activities, which are meant for sense gratification, or impersonal knowledge, which is meant for renunciation.

Although the three paths and their practices are different, they appear the same in the eyes of foolish people. The people of India who are engaged in *karma-kāṇḍa* consider every human being under the jurisdiction of *karma-kāṇḍa* like themselves. Until one personally understands the powerful reactions of karma, he cannot avoid glorifying karma and desiring to achieve its fruits. When knowledge is awakened, fruitive activities subside and one's self-realization becomes completely purified, then one can finally identify with the propensity for devotional service. One who misunderstands the path of *bhakti* as another version of the path of karma considers himself a practitioner of *jñāna* and simply creates anxiety for himself. Yet the activities performed by such *jñānīs* fall more or less under the category of karma.

Although the self-realization of those who follow the path of *bhakti* is not actually under the jurisdiction of karma, it appears as such to the eyes of the *karmīs* and *jñānīs*. Respectable persons who are attached to fruitive activities mistakenly consider that the devotees who have taken shelter of the lotus feet of the Lord are on the same platform as themselves and forced to enjoy the fruits of karma. Thanks to their poor fund of knowledge, the *jñānīs* have convinced themselves that the devotees are chained by the laws of karma. Indeed, other than those engaged on the path of *bhakti*, all people—the *karmīs*, the *jñānīs*, and the whimsical—consider that devotees are forced to enjoy the fruits of karma. But in the pure devotional path this conclusion is actually very weak. Intelligent followers of the above-mentioned three paths will undoubtedly profit in this regard by referring to the innumerable books, life histories of sages, and historical incidents connected with these paths.

Those who have accepted the rulings of the scriptures on karma with unshakable faith and fixed minds are naturally indifferent to the scriptural conclusions of *jñāna* and *bhakti* spoken by the *Upaniṣads*. That is why we have written this present essay to appeal to those who are attached to karma. This present essay will consist of topics related with the realm of karma and its logical analysis. Therefore

this chapter is being named *Prakṛti-jana-kāṇḍa*, and the next chapter must be named *Hari-jana-kāṇḍa*. In that chapter we will discuss topics concerning the communities of *jñānīs* and *hari-janas*, who are both beyond the jurisdiction of karma. Since worldly people do not completely reject the statements of literatures that respect the *jñāna* and *bhakti* scriptures, there will be no fault in quoting herein evidence and arguments from those literatures.

It is an established fact that the descendants of those who were even once known in society as *brāhmaṇas* are all considered *brāhmaṇas*. The descendants of those who have once somehow been designated *brāhmaṇas*—in Satya, Tretā, or Dvāpara-yugas—have kept their claims to the brahminical designation and authority intact with the help of the twenty *Dharma-sāstras* and social customs. In this regard we can only say that in early times ten *samskāras*, or purificatory processes, were followed by the *brāhmaṇas*. Among these, one is the *garbhādāna* ceremony, which was based on seminal line. It has, however, been changed and perverted in the course of time. According to the opinion of Devala, if the womb is once purified before intercourse then it is not necessary to purify the womb before every pregnancy. He states this as follows:

sakṛc ca samskṛtā nārī sarva-garbheṣu samskṛtā

“A once-consecrated women is consecrated for all her pregnancies.”

The respected *smārta* Raghunandana Bhaṭṭācārya of Bengal was also of the opinion that the *samskāra* need only be performed once. But if this *samskāra* was taken more seriously, then seminal consideration would have been more applicable. In the *Mahābhārata* (*Vana-parva* 180.31-32) it is stated:

jātir atra mahā-sarpa manuṣyatve mahā-mate
saṅkarāt sarva-varṇānām duṣparīkṣyeti me matiḥ

sarve sarvāsv apatyāni janayanti sadā narāḥ
vāṇ-maithunam atho janma maraṇam ca samam nṛṇām

“Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira said to Nahuṣa: O broad-minded, great serpent, because there are persons born from mixed marriages among each of the *varṇas*, it is extremely difficult to determine an individual's caste. This is my opinion. The reason for this is that men of all castes are able to beget children in the women of any caste. Speech, sex, birth, and death are similar for men of all castes.”

It is especially difficult to ascertain whether a given person is born from a *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, or other caste father. Other than trusting a person's words there is no way to investigate his caste. The caste of those belonging to *brāhmaṇa* and other caste dynasties coming from Lord Brahmā and said to be purely descending to the present day cannot be known in truth without definitely validating every person in the line. In his commentary on the above verse, Śrī Nilakaṇṭha, the commentator on the *Mahābhārata*, quotes from the *Vedas* as follows:

na caitad vidmo brāhmaṇāḥ smo vayam abrāhmaṇā veti

“We do not know whether we are *brāhmaṇas* or non-*brāhmaṇas*.” Such doubts arose in the hearts of the truthful sages.

The qualification of those who take birth in *brāhmaṇa* families but are unable to maintain brahminical qualities and the qualification of their descendants needs to

be considered. By immoral activities the qualification and potency based on seminal descent is reduced, and by sinful activities persons become sinners and fall from their positions. The compilers of *Dharma-śāstras* Viṣṇu (93.7-13) and Manu (4.192, 195-200) have stated as follows:

<i>na vāry api prayacchet tu</i>	<i>vaiḍāla-vratike dvije</i>
<i>na baka-vratike vipre</i>	<i>nāveda-vidi dharma-vit</i>
<i>dharma-dhvajī sadā lubdhaś</i>	<i>chādmiko loka-dambhakaḥ</i>
<i>vaiḍāla-vratiko jñeyo</i>	<i>himsra-sarvābhisandhikaḥ</i>
<i>adho-dṛṣṭir naikṛtikaḥ</i>	<i>svārtha-sādhana-tatparaḥ</i>
<i>śaṭho mithyā-vinītaś ca</i>	<i>baka-vrata-paro dvijaḥ</i>
<i>ye baka-vratino viprā</i>	<i>ye ca mārjāra-liṅginaḥ</i>
<i>te patanty andha-tāmisre</i>	<i>tena pāpena karmaṇā</i>
<i>na dharmasyāpadeśena</i>	<i>pāpaṁ kṛtvā vrataṁ caret</i>
<i>vratena pāpaṁ pracchādyā</i>	<i>kurvan strī-sūdra-dambhanam</i>
<i>pretyeha cedṛśo vipro</i>	<i>grhyate brahma-vādibhiḥ</i>
<i>chadmanācaritaṁ yac ca</i>	<i>tad vai rakṣāmsi gacchati</i>
<i>aliṅgī liṅgi-veṣeṇa</i>	<i>yo vṛttim upajīvati</i>
<i>sa liṅginām haraty enas</i>	<i>tiryag-yonau prajāyate</i>

“Religious-minded persons should not give even a drop of water to the hypocritical son of a *brāhmaṇa*, the follower of the “vow of a cat.” One should not give even a drop of water to the son of a *brāhmaṇa* who is either a sinful imposter or ignorant of the *Vedas*.

“One should know that a *dharmadhvajī* (who makes a false show of being religious), a person who always desires other's wealth, a duplicitous person, a cheater, an envious person, and a blasphemer is a hypocritical *brāhmaṇa* who follows the ‘vow of a cat.’

“An imposter *brāhmaṇa*, the follower of the ‘vow of the duck,’ is he who always looks down in order to make a show of humility, who is cruel, and who pretends to be submissive.

“As a result of their sinful activities, those who are hypocrites and imposters go to the hell known as Andha-tāmisra.

“Such people make a show of being religious in order to impress women and *sūdras* by pretending that their acts of atonement, which are meant for counteracting their sins, are simply pious vows.

“Such people are condemned in this world and the next by those who are conversant with the Absolute Truth. Vows that are executed with duplicity are simply demoniac.

“If someone accepts the symptoms and occupation of a status for which he is not qualified, he is guilty of breaking the principles of *varṇāśrama*, and as a result of those sins he will take birth as an animal.”

The *Dharma-śāstra* compiler Viṣṇu (82.3-29) also states:

hīnādhikāṅgān vivārijayet, vikarma-sthāṁś ca, vaiḍāla-vratikān, vṛthā-liṅginaḥ, nakṣatra-jīvināḥ, devalakāṁś ca, cikitsikān, aṇūdhā-putrān, tat-putrān, bahu-yājinaḥ,

grāma-yājinaḥ, śūdra-yājinaḥ, ayājya-yājinaḥ, tad-yājinaḥ, parva-kārān, sūcakān, bhṛtakādhyāpakān, bhṛtakādhyāpitān, śūdrānna-puṣṭān, patita-saṃsargān, anadhīyānān, sandhyopāsana-bhraṣṭān, rāja-sevakān, nagnān, pitrā vivādamānān, pitr-mātr-gurv-agni-svādhyāya-tyāginaś ceti, brāhmaṇāpasadā hy ete kathitāḥ paṅkti-dūṣakāḥ. etān vivarjayet yatnāt śrāddha-karmaṇi paṇḍitāḥ.

“One should reject the following *brāhmaṇas*: those with missing limbs, those with extra limbs, those who behave unjustly, hypocrites, those who falsely accept the signs of some status, professional astrologers, professional priests, physicians, the sons of unmarried women, their sons, worshipers of many gods, priests of the village, priests of the *śūdras*, priests of the untouchables, those who have failed to take their second birth, their priests, performers of religious rites, betrayers, salaried teachers, the students who pay the salaries, those who are nourished by the food of *śūdras*, those who associate with fallen persons, those who are ignorant of the *Vedas*, those who fail to observe the *sandhyā* rites (chanting the *Gāyatrī* mantra), government servants, those who do not wear clothes, those who quarrel with their fathers, and those who reject their father, mother, spiritual master, the sacred fire, or the study of the scriptures. Such persons are considered the worst kinds of *brāhmaṇas* and are disgraces to their line. Learned persons should carefully reject these persons while performing the *śrāddha* ceremony for their fathers.”

Since *brāhmaṇas* are also capable of committing any of the nine types of sinful activities—*atipātaka, mahāpātaka, anupātaka, upapātaka, jāti-bhramśa-kara, saṅkarī-karaṇa* (killing animals), *pātrī-karaṇa, malāvaha*, and *prakīrṇaka*—it is difficult to know how far a *brāhmaṇa* is qualified if he conceals these sins without undergoing atonement. It is true that a *brāhmaṇa* can escape reproach from society if he successfully conceals those sinful activities by which he becomes fallen, but if he does so his truthfulness is ruined and as a result he is degraded. The descendants of such a person will then surely and proudly accept that same sinful way of life.

According to their occupations, there are many types of *brāhmaṇas*. Atri (364-374) has stated:

<i>devo munir dvijo rājā</i>	<i>vaiśyaḥ śūdro niṣādakāḥ</i>
<i>paśur mleccho 'pi cāṇḍālo</i>	<i>viprā daśa-vidhāḥ smṛtāḥ</i>

<i>sandhyām snānam japam homam</i>	<i>devatā-nitya-pūjanam</i>
<i>atithim vaiśvadevaṃ ca</i>	<i>deva-brāhmaṇa ucyate</i>

<i>śāke patre phale mūle</i>	<i>vana-vāse sadā rataḥ</i>
<i>nirato 'rahaḥ śrāddhe</i>	<i>sa vipro munir ucyate</i>

<i>vedāntam paṭhate nityam</i>	<i>sarva-saṅgam parityajet</i>
<i>sāṅkhya-yoga-vicāra-sthaḥ</i>	<i>sa vipro dvija ucyate</i>

<i>astrāhatās ca dhanvānaḥ</i>	<i>saṅgrāme sarva-sammukhe</i>
<i>ārambhe nirjitā yena</i>	<i>sa vipraḥ kṣatra ucyate</i>

<i>kṛṣi-karma-rato yaś ca</i>	<i>gavām ca pratipālakaḥ</i>
<i>vāṇijya-vyavasāyaś ca</i>	<i>sa vipro vaiśya ucyate</i>

<i>lākṣā-lavaṇa-sammiśra- vikretā madhu-māmsānām</i>	<i>kusumbha-kṣīra-sarpiṣām sa vipraḥ śūdra ucyate</i>
<i>cauraś ca taskaraś caiva matsya-māmse sadā lubdho</i>	<i>sūcako daṁśakas tathā vipro niṣāda ucyate</i>
<i>brahma-tattvaṁ na jānāti tenaiva sa ca pāpena</i>	<i>brahma-sūtreṇa garvitaḥ vipraḥ paśur udāhṛtaḥ</i>
<i>vāpī-kūpa-tadāgānām niḥsaṅkaṁ rodhakaś caiva</i>	<i>ārāmasya saraḥsu ca sa vipro mleccha ucyate</i>
<i>kriyā-hīnaś ca mūrkhāś ca nirdayaḥ sarva-bhūteṣu</i>	<i>sarva-dharma-vivarjitaḥ vipraś caṇḍāla ucyate</i>

“There are ten kinds of *brāhmaṇas* mentioned in the scriptures—*devas*, *munis*, *dvijas*, *rājās*, *vaiśyas*, *śūdras*, *niṣādas*, *paśus*, *mlecchas*, and *caṇḍālas*.

“One who regularly bathes, chants *japa*, performs fire sacrifices, daily worships the demigods, observes the *sandhyā* rites, honors his guests, and worships the fire-god is a *deva-brāhmaṇa*.

“One who always lives in the forest, eats only spinach, leaves, fruits, and roots, and regularly performs the *śrāddha* rites is called a *muni-brāhmaṇa*.

“One who gives up all association and spends all his time reading Vedānta and studying Sāṅkhya-yoga is called a *dvija-vipra*.

“One who publicly attacks opponents who confront him with weapons and defeats them with his own weapons is called a *kṣatra-vipra*.

“One who likes to cultivate the land, protect cows and other animals, or accept the profession of trade and commerce is called a *vaiśya-vipra*.

“One who sells varnish, salt, safflower oil, milk, honey, or meat is called a *śūdra-vipra*.

“One who is a thief or a rogue, who gives bad counsel, who is a betrayer, who bites with his harsh words, and who is always greedy to eat fish and meat is called a *niṣāda-brāhmaṇa*.

“One who proudly advertises himself as a sanctified *brāhmaṇa* but is ignorant of the Absolute Truth is because of this sin called a *pasu-vipra*.

“One who prevents others from using ponds, wells, lakes, or gardens is called a *mleccha-vipra*.

“One who is devoid of pious activities, who is a fool, completely irreligious, and merciless to all living entities is called a *caṇḍāla-brāhmaṇa*.”

Apart from these ten kinds of *brāhmaṇas*, Atri Mahāśaya (376-379) also describes:

<i> jyotir-vido hy atharvāṇaḥ</i>	<i> kīra-paurāṇa-pāṭhakāḥ</i>
<i> āvikaś citrakāraś ca</i>	<i> vaidyo nakṣatra-pāṭhakaḥ</i>
<i> catur viprā na pūjyante</i>	<i> br̥haspati-samā yadi</i>
<i> māgadho māthuraś caiva</i>	<i> kāpaṭaḥ kauṭa-kāmalau</i>
<i> pañca viprā na pūjyante</i>	<i> br̥haspati-samā yadi</i>
<i> yajñe hi phala-hāniḥ syāt</i>	<i> tasmāt tāt parivarjayet</i>

“There are three types of *brāhmaṇas*—those who know astrology, those who know the *Atharva Veda*, and those who recite the *Purāṇas* like parrots.

“Goat traders, painters, physicians, and astrologers—these four kinds of *brāhmaṇas* never become worshipable, even if they are as learned as *Bṛhaspati*..

“*Māgadhas*, *Māthuras*, *Kāpaṭas*, *Kauṭas*, and *Kāmalas*—these five kinds of *brāhmaṇas* never become worshipable, even if they are as learned as *Bṛhaspati*.

“Such *brāhmaṇas* will spoil the results one's sacrifice, so they should be rejected.” In addition to this, *Atri* (287) also says:

śaṭham ca brāhmaṇam hatvā śūdra-hatyā-vratam caret

“If one kills a deceitful *brāhmaṇa* he should perform the same atonement as prescribed for killing a *śūdra*.” According to *Atri*, a compiler of the *Dharma-śāstras*, besides these above-mentioned twenty-three types of *brāhmaṇas*, there is one other kind. He says as follows (*Atri* 375):

*vedair vihināś ca paṭhanti śāstram
śāstreṇa hīnāś ca purāṇa-pāṭhāḥ*

*purāṇa-hīnāḥ kṛṣiṇo bhavanti
bhraṣṭās tato bhāgavatā bhavanti*

If a *brāhmaṇa* is unable to extract any benefit from his hard studies of the Vedic literatures, he begins to study the *Dharma-śāstras*. If he is unable to abstract any benefit from studying the *Dharma-śāstras*, he becomes a reciter of the *Purāṇas*. If he fails to get any benefit from reciting the *Purāṇas*, he considers that it is better to earn his livelihood by farming. In other words, such people consider that studying the Vedic literatures, the *Dharma-śāstras*, or the *Purāṇas* is simply meant for earning one's livelihood; they see no other purpose in these activities. When such *brāhmaṇas* are unsuited for all these engagements, they even take to farming. When they cannot be successful even in reciting *Purāṇas*, they decide that farming is the best occupation for them. And when due to incompetence and lack of skills they fail to fill their bellies even by farming, they become spiritual masters of the *Vaiṣṇavas*, accumulate wealth, and advertise themselves as great devotees, establishing this as their means of livelihood.

In this way, including this pseudo-devotee *brāhmaṇa*, there are twenty-four varieties of *brāhmaṇas* described by the *Dharma-śāstra* compiler *Atri Mahāśaya*. *Manu* (2.157-158, 168, 172, and 4.245, 255) has stated:

*yathā kāṣṭha-mayo hastī yathā carma-mayo mṛgaḥ
yaś ca vipro 'nadhīyānas trayas te nāma bibhrati*

*yathā ṣaṇḍho 'phalaḥ strīṣu yathā gaur gavi cāphalā
yathā cājñe 'phalam dānam tathā vipro 'nṛḍho 'phalaḥ*

*yo 'nadhītya dvijo vedam anyatra kurute śramam
sa jīvan eva sūdratvam āśu gacchati sānvayaḥ*

śūdreṇa hi samas tāvad yāvad vede na jāyate

uttamānuttamān gacchan hīnān hīnāmś ca varjayan

brāhmaṇaḥ śreṣṭhatām eti pratyavāyena śūdratām

yo 'nyathā santam ātmānam anyathā satsu bhāṣate
sa pāpa-kṛt-tamo loke stena ātmāpahāraḥ

“A *vipra* who does not study the *Vedas* is similar to a wooden elephant or a deer made of skin, which are an elephant or deer only in name but do not effectively function as such.

“As a eunuch is of no use to women and a cow cannot be impregnated by another cow, giving charity to a foolish *brāhmaṇa* who does not study the *Vedas* yields no result.

“One who in his lifetime does not endeavor to study the *Vedas* but labors hard in other pursuits quickly becomes a *śūdra* along with his family.

“One should know that until a *brāhmaṇa* is qualified in the *Vedas*, he is on the same level as a *śūdra*.

“If a *brāhmaṇa* disassociates himself from lower caste people and associates only with higher caste people, he attains greatness. If he does the opposite, he becomes a *śūdra*.

“A person with a particular nature who claims to be different when coming before a *sādhu* is the topmost sinner, a cheater of himself, and a thief.”

In the *Anuśāsana-parva*, Chapter 143, of the *Mahābhārata* it is stated:

guru-talpī guru-drohi guru-kutsā-ratiś sa yaḥ
brahma-vic cāpi patati brāhmaṇo brahma-yonitaḥ

“One who has sex with the wife of his spiritual master, one who is envious of his spiritual master, one who habitually criticizes his spiritual master such a *brāhmaṇa*, even if he knows the Absolute Truth, falls from his position.”

śruti-smṛtī ubhe netre viprāṇām parikīrtite
ekena vikalāḥ kāṇo dvābhyām andhaḥ prakīrtitaḥ

“The *śruti* and *smṛti* scriptures are the two eyes of the *brāhmaṇas*. Lacking one of them, a *brāhmaṇa* is half blind, and deprived of both he is considered completely blind.”

It is stated in the *Kūrma Purāṇa*:

yo 'nyatra kurute yatnam anadhītya śrutim dvijāḥ
sa sammūḍho na sambhāṣyo veda-bāhyo dvijātibhiḥ

na veda-pāṭha-mātreṇa santuṣyed eṣa vai dvijāḥ
yathoktācāra-hīnas tu pañke gaur iva sīdati

yo 'dhītya vidhi-vad vedaṁ vedārtham na vicārayet
sa cāndhaḥ śūdra-kalpas tu padārtham na prapadyate

sevā śva-vṛttir yair uktā na samyak tair udāhṛtam
svacchanda-caritaḥ kva śvā vikṛitāsuḥ kva sevakaḥ

pañi-kṛtyātmanāḥ prāṇān ye vartante dvijādhamāḥ
teṣāṁ durātmanām annaṁ bhuktvā cāndrāyaṇaṁ caret

nādyāc chūdrasya vipro 'nnaṁ mohād vā yadi kāmataḥ
sa śūdra-yoniṁ vrajati yas tu bhuṅkte hy anāpadi

go-rakṣakān vāṇijakān tathā kāruka-śilinaḥ
preṣyān vārdhuṣikāṁś caiva viprān śūdra-vad ācaret

tṛṇaṁ kāṣṭhaṁ phalaṁ puṣpaṁ prakāśaṁ vai hared budhaḥ
dharmārthaṁ kevalaṁ vipra hy anyathā patito bhavet

“O *brāhmaṇas*, one who does not study the *Vedas* but carefully endeavors for other pursuits is certainly foolish and ostracized from Vedic life. *Brāhmaṇas* should not speak with such a person.

“A *brāhmaṇa* should not be satisfied merely with studying the *Vedas*, for if he does not act accordingly he will be as helpless as a cow that has fallen in the mud.

“One should know that a person who has studied the *Vedas* but does not properly consider their purport is like a blind person or a *śūdra* and will never attain the supreme goal of life.

“Those who describe the occupation of a servant to be like that of a dog are unable to give a proper comparison. How can a freely wandering dog be compared to a sold out servant?

“If one eats food cooked by fallen, sinful *brāhmaṇas* who have sold themselves to others, then one must atone by observing *candrāyana*.

“A *brāhmaṇa* should never eat food cooked by a *śūdra*. If other than in an emergency one either willingly or mistakenly does eat food cooked by a *śūdra*, then as a result of eating such food he is born as a *śūdra*.

“Those *brāhmaṇas* who protect cows, engage in trade, become artists, take the occupation of servants, and loan money on interest are no better than *śūdras*.

“If a *brāhmaṇa* does not accumulate grass, wood, fruits, and flowers for religious purposes, he becomes eligible for falling down as result of such actions.”

By seminal consideration, the descendants of a *brāhmaṇa* are also *brāhmaṇas*—this belief has been generally accepted for a long time. There is no shortage of evidence from the *smṛtis*, *Purāṇas*, and histories in support of this belief. Yet by the evidence that we have presented regarding the degradation of *brāhmaṇas*, the disqualification of *brāhmaṇas* who commit sinful activities, and the uncertainty of who is a real *brāhmaṇa*, every listener will be able to understand how qualified the present day descendants of *brāhmaṇas* are.

Why should those who are *brāhmaṇas* by birth but have taken to other occupational duties and not shown any interest in acquiring the characteristics of properly initiated *brāhmaṇas* be respected? The word *bandhu* generally means relatives like one's son, but the word *brahma-bandhu* cannot be simply used for those who are related to *brāhmaṇas* by birth. Since the word *brahma-bandhu* has been used in a derogatory way, such descendants of *brāhmaṇas* have not accepted this designation very proudly. Women, *śūdras*, and *brahma-bandhus* all belong to a particular category that is inferior to the class of topmost *brāhmaṇas*. These people have no qualification to study the *Vedas*. *Brahma-bandhus* are those who are devoid of brahminical culture, engaged in abominable activities, and *brāhmaṇas* simply by birth. It is stated in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*:

asmat kulīno 'nanūcya brahma-bandhur iva bhavati

“A *brahma-bandhu*, or a mere relative of a *brāhmaṇa*, is one who belongs to our *brāhmaṇa* community but has not studied the *Vedas*.”

Śrīpāda Saṅkarācārya has commented on this verse as follows: *he saumyā ananūcya anadhītya brahma-bandhur iva bhavatīti brāhmaṇān bandhūn vyapadiśati, na svayaṁ brāhmaṇa-vṛtaḥ*.—“O beautiful woman, one who has not studied the *Vedas* is like a mere relative of *brāhmaṇas*. He calls the *brāhmaṇas* his relatives, but he does not have the behavior of a *brāhmaṇa*.”

It is stated in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (1.4.25):

strī-śūdra-dvijabandhūnām trayī na śruti-gocarā

“The *R̥g*, *Sāma*, and *Yajur Vedas* should not be recited before women, *śūdras*, and *dvija-bandhus*.”

One should neither kill nor award physical punishment to *brahma-bandhus*. This is confirmed in the following words of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (1.7.57):

eṣa hi brahma-bandhūnām vadho nānyo 'sti daihikah

Persons who are engaged in fruitive activities are less-intelligent than those who have the nature of either a *jñānī* or a *bhakta*. The goal of fruitive workers is to attain worldly or heavenly happiness. The majority of people in this world are inclined towards fruitive activities. Only the devotees and *jñānīs* have become liberated from this fruitive mentality. Ordinary people are unable to realize knowledge higher than their mundane experience.

The descriptions of the heavenly planets given in the *karma-śāstras* are for persons who are attached to the material world. Such persons are also familiar with the presence of misery. The prototype misery described in the *karma-śāstras* is that found on the hellish planets. It is a fact that on the strength of their pious and sinful activities less-intelligent, ordinary people who are attached to *karma-kāṇḍa* achieve either heaven or hell in the next life and distinction or atonement in this life.

In order to attract the minds of such persons and entice them to behave in appropriate ways, various flowery exaggerations are found in the instructions of their scriptures. Then again, the condemnations are also exaggerated so that these people will not engage in sinful activities. The fear of misery, dishonor, and condemnation stops many of these people from becoming degraded. In this way, such persons are regulated by required atonements and by hell and other punishments.

The glories, prestige, and prowess of the *brāhmaṇas* are profusely sung in the scriptures. Similarly, the excellence of *brāhmaṇas* when they are qualified and their degraded condition when they are disqualified are also found described in the same scriptures. Such principles need to be prescribed for those who are directed by the ideas of relative good and bad. In order to minimize the disappointment of the cripple-minded, incapable, weak, foolish, fearful *brahma-bandhus*, we can respectfully quote a few statements from the scriptures. The *Mahābhārata*, *Vana-parva*, states:

*nādhyāpanāt yājanād vā anyasmād vā pratigrahāt
doṣo bhavati viprāṇām jvalitāgni-samā dvijāḥ*

durvedā vā suvedā vā prākṛtāḥ saṁskṛtās tathā

brāhmaṇā nāvamantavyā bhasmācchannā ivāgnayaḥ

yathā śmaśāne dīptaujāḥ pāvako naiva duṣyati
evam vidvān avidvān vā brāhmaṇo naiva duṣyati

“*Brāhmaṇas* are like burning fire; therefore even if they do not study the *Vedas*, even if they act as priests for those who should not perform Vedic sacrifices, or even if they accept charity from low-class people, they are not at fault.

“Whether *brāhmaṇas* possess knowledge of the *Vedas* or are devoid of knowledge of the *Vedas*, whether they are worldly or have undergone the reformatory processes, they do not deserve to be disrespected, for they are like fire covered by ashes.

“As the bright fire of the funeral pyre is not considered impure, a *brāhmaṇa*, whether foolish or learned, is not faulty.”

Parāśara says:

yuge yuge ca ye dharmās tatra tatra ca ye dvijāḥ
teṣāṃ nindā na kartavyā yuga-rūpā hi te dvijāḥ

“The predominant religious principles of a particular age are followed by *brāhmaṇas* (who are twice-born according to those principles) according to the time, therefore such *brāhmaṇas* should not be condemned.”

The purpose of these statements found in the scriptures is to somehow minimize the unfortunate condition of the incapable living entities. But those who fall down from the position of real *brāhmaṇas* with the help of these statements destroy their religious principles. Bṛhaspati says:

kevalam śāstram āśritya na kartavyo vinirṇayaḥ
yukti-hīna-vicāre tu dharma-hāniḥ prajāyate

“One should not conclude that the statements meant to minimize the disappointment of unqualified persons who are unable to follow the real instructions of the *Dharma-śāstras* comprise the actual purport of the scriptures.” The statements of Parāśara, the narrations of the *Mahābhārata*, and other such authoritative sources are just like lamps of hope for those whose desires are thwarted in the kingdom of hopelessness. If one carefully considers, then he will understand that the aim of the scriptures is to minimize the hopelessness of the living entities, encourage them to behave better in the future, uplift the non-*brāhmaṇas* to the level of *brāhmaṇas*, and prevent the further degradation of non-*brāhmaṇas*.

The compilers of the scriptures did not ever intend to block the living entities' path of progress and perfection. That is why the most intelligent Bṛhaspati Mahāśaya has said that one should not ascertain the conclusion by simply reading the scriptures, because if one considers without proper reasoning he becomes irreligious. A compiler of *Dharma-śāstras*, Viṣṇu (71.1), states as follows: *atha kaṅca nāvamanyeta*—“Do not disrespect anyone.”

A person should not in any way disregard or condemn even the lowest class of men in this world, and what to speak of the *brāhmaṇas*, who are the highest class. A person who condemns or insults another certainly commits a sin. Even to hide the real truth for the benefit of the world is also a sign of cheating. The *Mahābhārata*, *Vana-parva*, has established that simplicity is the only identification

of a *brāhmaṇa*. Therefore we find that by the influence of this extraordinary quality the ideals of simplicity are found in scriptures that are written by *brāhmaṇas*. Neutrality is the ornament of the simple-minded *brāhmaṇas*. A *brāhmaṇa* proves his simplicity by opening his heart and speaking the truth, even if it hampers his own self-interest. Wherever there is a lack of simplicity one should know that there is no question of brahminical culture.

The statements of the *Vedas*, the practical ritual textbooks, the *Dharma-śāstras*, the *Purāṇas*, the *Itihāsas*, the *Paṭalas*, and other literatures compiled in a spirit of simplicity by the sages are meant only for the benefit of the people of the world, not for condemning or insulting incapable persons. When neutral, thoughtful persons who follow the authority of these scriptures disclose the real purport of the *Dharma-śāstras* to ignorant, selfish people, then those who try to hamper the prestige of such truthful persons and safeguard their own interests like low-class people by publicly criticizing the *śāstras* and the speaker of the *śāstras* are cowards and violators of religious principles.

If someone blasphemes the *Vedas*, the ritual textbooks that follow the Vedic version, the *Dharma-śāstras*, the *Purāṇas*, the *Tantras*, as well as neutral speakers of the truth and think that this will enhance the prestige of degraded persons like themselves, then honest fruitive workers will never approve. Let the *brāhmaṇas* become purely brahminical, and let the prestige of the *brāhmaṇas* who have actually become brahminical remain intact forever—this is the intention of the *śāstras* and the speakers of the *śāstras*; they never want to condemn the *brāhmaṇas*. We are also of this opinion. One should not engage in the sin of criticizing *brāhmaṇas* like low-class, selfish proponents of argumentative views who hanker after high prestige; rather one should study the following verses of Manu. There is no use of gaining prestige from such people. The *Mānava-dharma-śāstra* (2.162-163) says:

sammānād brāhmaṇo nityam uddhijet viṣād iva
amṛtasyeva cākāṅkṣed avamānasya sarvadā

sukhaṁ hy avamataḥ śete sukhaṁ ca pratibudhyate
sukhaṁ carati loke 'sminn avamantā vinaśyati

“Throughout his life a *brāhmaṇa* should consider material prestige to be like poison and dishonor to be like nectar.

“After all, if one learns to tolerate dishonor, then his agitation will subside and he will happily sleep, happily wake, and happily move about. The person who insults him will as a result of his sin become embarrassed, and his happiness in this and the next life will be vanquished.”

Religious principles stood on four legs in Satya-yuga, on three legs in Tretā-yuga, on two legs in Dvāpara-yuga, and on only one leg in Kali-yuga. The *brāhmaṇas*, who are the priests of these religious principles, also become proportionately degraded. If one ascribes the prestige of a Satya-yuga *brāhmaṇa* to a Kali-yuga *brāhmaṇa*, the result is simply a distortion of the truth. If one offers a *brāhmaṇa* more respect than he deserves, then the glories of he who offers the respect will increase and the respected *brāhmaṇa*'s affection for him will increase. But if a respected *brāhmaṇa* forgets his actual position out of pride, then when he remembers the following statement from the *Viṣṇu-yāmala* he will be agitated and lose sleep at night, as previously confirmed by Manu. When those *brāhmaṇas* who

know the condemnations of the Viṣṇu-yāmala hear such things, they should keep their mouths shut. The Yāmala says:

aśuddhāḥ śūdra-kalpā hi brāhmaṇāḥ kali-sambhavāḥ

“The *brāhmaṇas* born in Kali-yuga are impure and no better than *śūdras*.” In Kali-yuga, or the age of quarrel, seminal lines are not pure, so those born as *brāhmaṇas* are equal to *śūdras* and qualified only in name. Such *brāhmaṇas* cannot be purified by Vedic rituals. Rather they can be purified by following the *Tantras*.

Has the king of *smṛtis*, *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, been neglected by such persons because the above verse from the Viṣṇu-yāmala is quoted in the beginning of its fifth *Vilāsa*? This is the age of Kali, so anything is possible! In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.7.5) it is stated:

jano 'bhadra-rucir bhadra bhaviṣyati kalau yuge

“O gentle one, the people in Kali-yuga will be addicted to all types of sinful activities.”

We have thus discussed seminal considerations regarding persons and time. Now we are quoting Manu regarding the question of place. The *Manu-saṁhitā* (2.17-24) states:

*sarasvatī-dṛṣadvatyor deva-nadyor yad antaram
tat deva-nirmitaṁ deśaṁ brahmāvartaṁ pracakṣate*

*tasmin deśe ya ācāraḥ pārampara-kramāgataḥ
varṇānāṁ sāntarālānāṁ sa sad-ācāra ucyate*

*kurukṣetraṁ ca matsyāś ca pañcālāḥ śūrasenakāḥ
eṣa brahmarṣi-deśo vai brahmāvartād anantaraḥ*

*etad-deśa-prasūtasya sakāśād agra-janmanaḥ
svaṁ svaṁ caritraṁ śikṣeran pṛthivyāṁ sarva-mānavāḥ*

pratyag eva prayāgāc ca madhya-deśaḥ prakīrtitaḥ

*ā-samudrāt tu vai pūrvāt ā-samudrāt tu paścimāt
taylor evāntaraṁ giryor āryāvartaṁ vidur budhāḥ*

*kṛṣṇa-sāras tu carati mṛgo yatra svabhāvataḥ
sa jñeyo yajñiyo deśo mleccha-deśas tataḥ paraḥ*

*etān dvijātyayā deśān saṁśrayeran prayatnataḥ
śūdras tu yasmin kasmin vā nivased vṛtti-karṣitaḥ*

“The tract of land founded by the demigods between the celestial Sarasvatī and Dṛṣadvatī Rivers is called Brahmavarta.

“The traditional behavior of the people in the various castes and mixed classes of that land is called *sad-ācāra*, or proper behavior.

“Kurukṣetra, Matsya, Pañcāla, and Śūrasena, or Mathurā—these four sacred provinces situated in the south of Brahmāvarta are called Brahmarṣi-deśa.

“The people of this world should mold their character after the *brāhmaṇas* who originally inhabited all these provinces.

“The province west of Prayāga is named Madhya-deśa.

“The area between the Himālaya and Vindhya Mountains and stretching from the eastern ocean to the western ocean is called Āryāvarta by those who are learned.

“The place where spotted deer naturally wander is suitable for sacrifices. Other places are known as Mleccha-deśas, the lands of barbarians.

“Those who are twice-born should endeavor to take shelter of these pure tracts of land. There is no restriction, however, on where a *śūdra* may earn his livelihood. Therefore *brāhmaṇas* of places other than where sacrifices are performed are understood to be residents of Mleccha-deśas and behaving improperly. In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.21.8) a mood opposite to that described above is seen in the following words:

akṛṣṇa-sāro deśānām abrahmaṇyo 'sucir bhavet
kṛṣṇa-sāro 'py asauvīra- kīkaṭā saṃskṛterīṇam

“Among places, those bereft of the spotted antelope, those devoid of devotion to the *brāhmaṇas*, those possessing spotted antelopes but bereft of respectable men, provinces like Kīkaṭa and places where cleanliness and purificatory rites are neglected, where meat-eaters are prominent or where the earth is barren, are all considered to be contaminated lands.”

Anyway, leaving aside the evidence we have quoted so far from the scriptures regarding seminal *brāhmaṇas*, we will now discuss the processes mentioned in the *śāstras* by which a person attains the position of an actual *brāhmaṇa*, and who is a fit candidate for becoming a *brāhmaṇa*.

In the *Muktikopaniṣad* there is a list of one hundred eight *Upaniṣads*, among which, the thirty-eighth is named *Vajra-sūcikopaniṣad*. It is said that Śrī Śaṅkarācārya became famous by composing an elaborate commentary on this *Upaniṣad*. In the *Vajra-sūcikopaniṣad* it is stated:

yaj jñānād yānti munayo brāhmaṇyaṃ paramādbhūtam
tat trai-pada-brahma-tattvam aham asmīti cintaye

om āpyāyantv iti śāntiḥ

cit-sad-ānanda-rūpāya sarva-dhī-vṛtti-sākṣiṇe
namo vedānta-vedyāya brahmaṇe 'nanta-rūpiṇe

om vajra-sūcīm pravakṣyāmi śāstram ajñāna-bhedanam
dūṣaṇaṃ jñāna-hīnānām bhūṣaṇaṃ jñāna-cakṣuṣām

brahma-kṣatriya-vaiśya-śūdrā iti catvāro varṇās teṣāṃ varṇānām brāhmaṇa eva
pradhāna iti veda-vacanānurūpaṃ smṛtibhir apy uktam. tatra codyam asti ko vā
brāhmaṇo nāma. kim jīvaḥ kim dehaḥ kim jātiḥ kim jñānaṃ kim karma kim dhārmika
iti. tatra prathamō jīvo brāhmaṇa iti cet tan na. atītānāgatāneka-dehānām jīvasyaika-
rūpatvād ekasyāpi karma-vaśād aneka-deha-sambhavāt sarva-śarīrāṇām jīva-
svaika-rūpatvāc ca. tasmān na jīvo brāhmaṇa iti. tarhi deho brāhmaṇa iti cet tan na ā-
caṇḍālādi-paryantānām manuṣyānām pāñca-bhautikatvena dehasyaika-rūpatvāj jarā-
marāṇa-dharmādharmādi-sāmya-darśanād brāhmaṇaḥ śveta-varṇaḥ kṣatriyo rakta-
varṇo vaiśyaḥ pīta-varṇaḥ śūdraḥ kṛṣṇa-varṇa iti niyamābhāvāt. pitrādi-śarīra-
dahane putrādinām brahma-hatyādi-doṣa-sambhavāc ca tasmān na deho brāhmaṇa iti.
tarhi jātir brāhmaṇa iti cet tan na. tatra jāty-antara-jantuṣu aneka-jāti-sambhavā

maharṣayo bahavaḥ santi. ṛṣyaśṛṅgo mṛgaḥ. kauśikaḥ kuśāt. jāmbuko jambukāt. vālmīko valmīkāt. vyāsaḥ kaivarta-kanyāyām. śaśa-prṣṭhāt gautamaḥ. vaiśiṣṭhaḥ ūrvaśyām. agastyaḥ kalase jāta iti śrutatvāt. eteṣāṃ jātyā vināpy agre jñāna-pratipādītā ṛṣayo bahavaḥ santi. tasmān na jātiḥ brāhmaṇa iti. tarhi jñāno brāhmaṇa iti cet tan na. kṣatriyādayo 'pi paramārtha-darśino 'bhikṣā bahavaḥ santi. tasmān na jñānaṃ brāhmaṇa iti. tarhi karma brāhmaṇa iti cet tan na. sarveṣāṃ prānināṃ prārabdha-saṅcitāgāmi-karma-sādharmya-darśanāt karmābhipreritāḥ santaḥ janāḥ kriyāḥ kurvanti. tasmān na karma brāhmaṇa iti. tarhi dhārmiko brāhmaṇa iti cet tan na. kṣatriyādayo hiraṇya-dātāro bahavaḥ santi. tasmān na dhārmiko brāhmaṇa iti. tarhi ko vā brāhmaṇo nāma. yaḥ kaścīd ātmānaṃ advitīyaṃ jāti-guṇa-kriyā-hīnaṃ ṣaḍ-ūrmi-ṣaḍ-bhāvety-ādi-sarva-doṣa-rahitaṃ satya-jñānānandānanta-svarūpaṃ svayaṃ nirvikalpaṃ aśeṣa-kalpādhāraṃ aśeṣa-bhūtāntar-yāmitvena vartamānaṃ antar bahiḥ cākāśa-vad anusyūtaṃ akhaṇḍānanda-svabhāvaṃ apremeyaṃ anubhavaika-vedyaṃ aparokṣatayā bhāsamānaṃ kara-talāmalaka-vat sākṣād aparokṣi-kṛtya kṛtārthatayā kāma-rāgādi-doṣa-rahitaḥ śama-damādi-sampanno bhāva-mātsarya-tṛṣṇāśā-mohādi-rahito dambhāhankārādibhir asaṃsprṣṭa-cetā vartate. evaṃ ukta-lakṣaṇo yaḥ sa eva brāhmaṇa iti śruti-smṛti-purāṇetihāsānām abhiprāyaḥ. anyathā hi brāhmaṇatva-siddhir nāsty eva. sac-cid-ānandaṃ ātmānaṃ advitīyaṃ brahma bhāvayed ātmānaṃ sac-cid-ānandaṃ brahma bhāvayed ity upaṇiṣat.

om āpyāyantv iti śāntiḥ.

“I meditate on that sac-cid-ānanda supreme knowledge, endowed with three features, by which sages attain the wonderful platform of brahminical culture.

“I invoke peace by reciting the mantra beginning, “May You be pleased.”

“I offer my respectful obeisances to the Supreme Brahman, who possesses unlimited forms, who is known by the *Vedānta*, whose form is sac-cid-ānanda, and who is the witness of all activities of living intelligence.

“I am now speaking the *Vajra-sūcī-śāstra*. This knowledge dissipates ignorance, reproaches the ignorant persons, and is the ornament of intelligent persons with vision.

“There are four *varṇas*—*brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*, and *śūdra*. According to the statements of the *Vedas*, the *brāhmaṇas* are the highest class. This is confirmed by the *smṛtis* as well. Therefore the question now comes: Who is a *brāhmaṇa*? The living entity, the body, the caste, the knowledge, the activities, or the religionist—of these, which is the *brāhmaṇa*? If it is proposed that the living entity is the *brāhmaṇa*, that is not correct. The living entity remains the same in the past, present, or future. Though he receives various types of bodies according to his karma, he remains unchanged. Therefore the living entity is not the *brāhmaṇa*. Then is the body the *brāhmaṇa*? No, it is not. The bodies of human beings down to the *caṇḍāla* are all made of the same five gross elements. Therefore birth and death and religion and irreligion equally effect all bodies, and since there is no law that the *brāhmaṇas* are white, the *kṣatriyas* are red, the *vaiśyas* are yellow, and the *śūdras* are black, the body is therefore not the *brāhmaṇa*. Moreover, when the son of a *brāhmaṇa* burns the body of his dead father, he does not commit the sin of killing a *brāhmaṇa*. Therefore the body is not the *brāhmaṇa*. So, then, is caste the *brāhmaṇa*? No, this is also not the case. Many great sages have been born of other living entities. *Ṛṣyaśṛṅga* was born from a deer, *Kauśika* was born from *kuśa* grass, *Jāmbuka Ṛṣi* was born from a jackal, *Vālmīki* was born from an ant hill, *Vyāsadeva*

was born from a fisherman's daughter, Gautama was born from the back of a rabbit, Vasiṣṭha was born from Ūrvaśī, and Agastya was born from a pitcher. Apart from these personalities, there are many other wise persons born from other castes who became sages. Therefore caste is not the *brāhmaṇa*. So, then, is knowledge the *brāhmaṇa*? No, it is not that either. Because many persons, such as some *kṣatriyas*, were very learned and knew the Absolute Truth. Therefore knowledge is also not the *brāhmaṇa*. Then are activities the *brāhmaṇa*? No, they are not. Because every living entity shares the common nature of having to suffer the matured reactions of his karma that come to him in the future. By karma, human beings are engaged in further karma. Therefore activities are not the *brāhmaṇa*. Then is the religionist the *brāhmaṇa*? No, he is not. Because many *kṣatriyas* give gold in charity. Therefore the religionist is not the *brāhmaṇa*. Then who is the *brāhmaṇa*? Anyone who knows the Self as one; devoid of mundane caste, qualities, and activities; devoid of contamination by the six enemies¹ and six waves²; the personification of transcendental knowledge and bliss; beyond duality, yet the basis of all material dualities; the Supersoul of all living entities; all-pervading inside and outside like the vast sky; endowed with uninterrupted bliss; immeasurable; known only through spiritual realization; and directly self-manifesting—one who directly realizes the Self (as one sees an *āmlakī* fruit in the palm of his hand), who lives always satisfied, devoid of faults like lust and anger, who possesses qualities like peacefulness and self-control, who is devoid of envy, the thirst for material enjoyment, illusion, and other faults, and who is untouched by pride, false ego, and so on—such a person is a *brāhmaṇa*. This is also the opinion of the *śrutis*, *smṛtis*, *Itihāsas*, *Purāṇas*, and other scriptures. Otherwise one cannot be a real *brāhmaṇa*. The *Upaniṣads* instruct us that the Supreme Soul is *sac-cid-ānanda* and the Absolute Truth, one without a second.” It is stated in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* of the *Sāma Veda* (4th *prapaṭhaka*, 4th *khaṇḍa*) as follows:

1. *satyakāmo ha jābālo jābālām mātaram āmantrayām cakre brahmacaryam bhavati vivatsyāmi. kim gotro 'ham asmīti.* 2. *sā hainam uvāca. nāham etad veda. tāta yad gotras tvam asi. bahv-aham carantī paricārīṇi yauvane tvām alabhe. sā aham etan na veda. yad gotras tvam asi. jābālā tu nāmāham asmi. satyakāmo nāma tvam asi. sa satyakāmo eva jābālo bruvīthā iti.* 3. *sa ha hāridrumataṁ gautamaṁ etya uvāca. brahmacaryam bhagavati vatsyamāmy upeyām bhagavantam iti.* 4. *taṁ hovāca kim gotro nu saumyāsīti. sa hovāca. nāham etad veda bho yad gotro 'ham asmi. aprccham mātaram. sāmā pratyabravīd bahv-aham carantī paricārīṇi yauvane tvām alabhe. sāham etan na veda yad gotras tvam asi. jābālā tu nāmā aham asmi. satyakāmo nāma tvam asīti. so 'ham satyakāmaḥ jābālo 'smi bho iti.* 5. *taṁ hovāca na etad abrahmaṇo vivaktum arhati. samidham saumya āhara upayitvā neṣye. na satyād agā iti.*

“Once Satyakāma, the son of Jābālā, asked his mother, ‘I want to live as a *brahmacārī*. Which dynasty do I belong to?’ In answer, Jābālā told Satyakāma, ‘My son, I do not know which dynasty you belong to; in my youth I served as a maidservant in various places and at that time begot you as my son. Therefore I don't know which *gotra* you belong to. My name is Jābālā and your name is Satyakāma. Therefore you should say that you are Satyakāma Jābāla.’ Thereafter Satyakāma Jābāla approached Hāridrumata Gautama and said, ‘I wish to live with you as a *brahmacārī*.’ Gautama inquired, ‘O gentle one, which dynasty do you belong to?’ Satyakāma replied, ‘I do not know which dynasty I belong to. I asked my mother and she said, “I begot you as my son when I was wandering in my youth as a maidservant. Therefore I do not know which dynasty you belong to. My name is Jābālā, and your name is Satyakāma.” So I am Satyakāma Jābāla.’ Gautama then said to him, ‘My dear son, no one other than a *brāhmaṇa* can speak such truth that you have spoken. Therefore you are a *brāhmaṇa*, and I accept you. O

gentle one, go bring wood for sacrifice.' Jābāla replied, 'I am going right now to bring wood.' Gautama said, 'Never divert from the truth.'" In the *Mahābhārata* (*Śānti-parva*, *Mokṣa-dharma*, Chapter 188) our first evidence is given as follows:

bharadvāja uvāca
jaṅgamānām asaṅkhyeyāḥ sthāvarāṇām ca jātayaḥ
teṣāṃ vividha-varṇānām kuto varṇa-viniścayaḥ

bhṛgu uvāca
na viśeṣo 'sti varṇānām sarva-brāhmam idaṃ jagat
brahmaṇā pūrva-srṣṭam hi karmabhir varṇatām gatam

himsānrta-priyā lubdhāḥ sarva-karmopajīvināḥ
krṣṇāḥ śauca-paribhraṣṭās te dvijāḥ sūdratām gatāḥ

“Bharadvāja said: There are innumerable categories of animate and inanimate living entities. How can one determine their various *varṇas*?”

“Bhṛgu replied: There are no real differences among *varṇas*. When Brahṁā first created the universe, it was inhabited only by *brāhmaṇas*. Later on, as a result of their activities, people attained the designations of different *varṇas*.

“When the *brāhmaṇas* commit violence, speak lies, become greedy, earn their livelihood by any and all activities, lose their purity by sinful activities, then they become degraded into *sūdras*.”

In the *Śānti-parva*, Chapter 189, our second evidence is given as follows:

bharadvāja uvāca
brāhmaṇaḥ kena bhavati kṣatriyo vā dvijottama
vaiśyaḥ sūdraś ca viprarṣe tad brūhi vadatām vara

bhṛgu uvāca
jāta-karmādibhir yas tu saṁskāraiḥ saṁskṛtaḥ śuci
vedādhyayana-sampannaḥ ṣaṭsu karmasv avasthitaḥ

śaucācāra-sthitaḥ samyag vighasāśī guru-priyaḥ
nitya-vratī satya-parah sa vai brāhmaṇa ucyate

satya-dānam athādrola ānṛśamsyaṁ trapā ghrṇā
tapaś ca dṛśyate yatra sa brāhmaṇa iti smṛtaḥ

sarva-bhakṣa-ratir nityam sarva-dharma-karo 'śuciḥ
tyakta-vedas tv anācārah sa vai sūdra iti smṛtaḥ

sūdre caitad bhavel lakṣyam dvije tac ca na vidyate
na vai sūdro bhavec chūdro brāhmaṇo brāhmaṇo na ca

“Bharadvāja said: O best of the *brāhmaṇas*, O sage among the twice-born, O best of eloquent speakers, please explain how one becomes a *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*, or *sūdra*.”

“Bhṛgu replied: A person who has been purified by the reformatory processes like *jāta-karma*, or name-giving ceremony, who is clean, devoted to studying the *Vedas*, expert in the six occupations like worship and teaching worship, situated in pure

conduct, eating the remnants of his spiritual master, dear to the spiritual master, regularly engaged in performing vows, and fixed in truthfulness is considered a *brāhmaṇa*. A human being who is truthful, charitable, shy, not hateful, austere, not vengeful, and not cruel is a *brāhmaṇa*. One who is attached to eating all kinds of foods and performing all kinds of activities, who is impure, deviant from the principles of Vedic culture, and ill-behaved is known as a *śūdra*. If the symptoms of a *brāhmaṇa* are found in a *śūdra* and if the symptoms of a *śūdra* are found in a *brāhmaṇa*, then the *śūdra* should not be called a *śūdra* and the *brāhmaṇa* should not be called a *brāhmaṇa*.”

Our third evidence is given in the *Vana-parva*, Chapter 211, as follows:

śūdra-yonau hi jātasya sad-guṇānupatiṣṭhataḥ
vaiśyatvaṁ labhate brahman kṣatriyatvaṁ tathaiva ca

ārjave vartamānasya brāhmaṇyam abhijāyate

“O *brāhmaṇa*, if a person is born in the family of a *śūdra* and possesses good qualities, he becomes a *vaiśya* or a *kṣatriya*. And if he possesses the quality of simplicity, he is a *brāhmaṇa*.”

Our fourth evidence is stated in the *Vana-parva*, Chapter 215:

brāhmaṇo vyādhāya
sāmprataṁ ca mato me 'si brāhmaṇo nātra saṁśayaḥ
brāhmaṇaḥ patanīyeṣu vartamāno vikarmasu

dāmbhiko duṣkṛtaḥ prājñaḥ śūdreṇa sadṛśo bhavet
yas tu śūdro dame satye darṁ ca satatottṛhiṭaḥ
taṁ brāhmaṇam ahaṁ manye vṛttena hi bhaved dvijaḥ

“The *brāhmaṇa* told the pious hunter: In my opinion you are still a *brāhmaṇa*. There is no doubt about it. After all, a *brāhmaṇa* who is proud and engaged in various sinful activities that result in his falling down into the degradation of being contaminated by impure karma is equal to a *śūdra*. And I consider a *śūdra* who is self-controlled, truthful, and always enthusiastic about executing his religious duties to be a *brāhmaṇa*. Indeed, the only criteria for being a *brāhmaṇa* is to possess pure characteristics.”

Our fifth evidence is given in the *Śānti-parva*, Chapter 318, as follows:

sarve varṇā brāhmaṇā brahmajās ca
brahmāsyato brāhmaṇāḥ samprasūtāḥ
bāhubhyāṁ vai kṣatriyāḥ samprasūtāḥ
nābhyāṁ vaiśyāḥ pādātāś cāpi śūdrāḥ
sarve varṇā nānyathā veditavyāḥ

tat-stho brahmā tasthivāṁś cāparo yas
tasmai nityaṁ mokṣam āhur narendra

“Persons of all *varṇas* are *brāhmaṇas*, because they are all born from Lord Brahmā. The *brāhmaṇas* were born from the mouth of Brahmā, the *kṣatriyas* were born from his arms, the *vaiśyas* were born from his navel, and the *śūdras* were born from his legs. Do not consider the *varṇas* in another way. One who is fixed in knowledge is a *brāhmaṇa*. Therefore, O king, this *mokṣa-śāstra* was spoken for the

benefit of those *brāhmaṇas* and *kṣatriyas* who have attained knowledge. This is the opinion of ancient scholars.”

In his commentary on these verses Śrī Nīlakaṇṭha has stated: *tat-stho jñāna-niṣṭho yaḥ sa eva brahmā brāhmaṇaḥ. aparō kṣatriyādir api tasthau tasthivān.*—“Persons who are born from Brahṁā and fixed in knowledge are called *brāhmaṇas*. The other castes like *kṣatriyas* were also born from Brahṁā.”

Our sixth evidence is stated in the *Vana-parva*, Chapter 180, as follows:

sarpa uvāca
brāhmaṇaḥ ko bhaved rājan vedyam kim ca yudhiṣṭhira
braviḥy ati-matim tvām hi vākyaair anumimīmahe

yudhiṣṭhira uvāca
satyam dānam kṣamā-śīlam ānṛśamsyam tapo ghrṇā
drśyante yatra nāgendra sa brāhmaṇa iti smṛtaḥ

sarpa uvāca
śūdreṣv api ca satyam ca dānam akrodha eva ca
ānṛśamsyam ahimsā ca ghrṇā caiva yudhiṣṭhira

yudhiṣṭhira uvāca
śūdre tu yad bhavel lakṣma dvije tac ca na vidyate
na vai śūdro bhavec chūdro brāhmaṇo na ca brāhmaṇaḥ

yatraital lakṣyate sarpa vṛttam sa brāhmaṇaḥ smṛtaḥ
yatraitan na bhavet sarpa tam śūdrām iti nirdiśet

“The snake asked: O Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, who is a *brāhmaṇa*, and what is the object of knowledge? You are very intelligent, therefore I will be enlightened by your statement.

“Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira replied: A person who possesses truthfulness, charity, forgiveness, sobriety, gentleness, austerity, and lack of hatred is called a *brāhmaṇa*.

“The snake said: *Śūdras* also possess truthfulness, charity, freedom from anger, nonviolence, noneviousness, and lack of hatred.

“Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira replied to this: If such symptoms are found in a *śūdra* he should never be called a *śūdra*, just as a *brāhmaṇa* is not a *brāhmaṇa* if he does not possess these qualities.

“O snake, only a person who is endowed with the characteristics of a *brāhmaṇa* can be called a *brāhmaṇa*, otherwise he is a *śūdra*.”

By these six separate evidences quoted from the *Mahābhārata*, it is clearly understood that one should be accepted without hesitation as a *sāvitrya* or *daikṣya* (Vedic or spiritually initiated) *brāhmaṇa* if he possesses simplicity and the nature of a *brāhmaṇa*, regardless of his birth. Those who are *brāhmaṇas* by birth are very orthodox in regards to their eating and sexual relations. But these principles are not obstacles for the *sāvitrya brāhmaṇas*. We do not find any obstacles in the smooth performance of such persons' spiritual brahminical duties. All śāstric evidence that is unfavorable to the ascertainment of who is a *brāhmaṇa* on the basis of seminal descent are reasonable and unrefutable by argument. The *Dharma-śāstras* that support the seminal *brāhmaṇas* do not contradict Vyāsadeva. The evidence in Śrī *Mahābhārata*, however, is more important and more respected than

that of the *Dharma-śāstras*. The evidence of the *Dharma-śāstras* is only theoretical, while the evidence in the *Mahābhārata* is practice. Those who oppose this principle will simply confirm themselves as evil doers of this world.

Just as the *Vedas* and the *Mahābhārata* have confirmed that a person who is not a seminal *brāhmaṇa* yet possesses the qualities of a *brāhmaṇa* is accepted as a qualified *brāhmaṇa*, the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, which is the crest jewel of all scriptures, the ripened fruit of the Vedic tree, and the literature for perfect swanlike men, bravely and neutrally supports this doctrine.

In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (7.11.21-24, 35) it is described:

śamo damas tapaḥ śaucam santoṣaḥ kṣāntir ārjavam
jñānam dayācyutātmatvam satyam ca brahma-lakṣaṇam

“The symptoms of a *brāhmaṇa* are control of the mind, control of the senses, austerity and penance, cleanliness, satisfaction, forgiveness, simplicity, knowledge, mercy, truthfulness, and complete surrender to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

śauryam vīryam dhṛtis tejas tyāgaś cātma-jayaḥ kṣamā
brahmaṇyatā prasādaś ca satyam ca kṣatra-lakṣaṇam

“To be influential in battle, unconquerable, patient, challenging and charitable, to control the bodily necessities, to be forgiving, to be attached to the brahminical nature and to be always jolly and truthful—these are the symptoms of the *kṣatriya*.

deva-gurv-acyute bhaktis tri-varga-paripoṣaṇam
āstikiyam udyamo nityam naipunyaṁ vaiśya-lakṣaṇam

“Being always devoted to the demigods, the spiritual master and the Supreme Lord, Viṣṇu; endeavoring for advancement in religious principles, economic development and sense gratification [*dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*]; believing in the words of the spiritual master and scripture; and always endeavoring with expertise in earning money—these are the symptoms of the *vaiśya*.

śūdrasya sannatiḥ śaucam sevā svāminy amāyayā
amantra-yajño hy asteyam satyam go-vipra-rakṣaṇam

“Offering obeisances to the higher sections of society [the *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas* and *vaiśyas*], being always very clean, being free from duplicity, serving one's master, performing sacrifices without uttering mantras, not stealing, always speaking the truth and giving all protection to the cows and *brāhmaṇas*—these are the symptoms of the *śūdra*.”

yasya yal lakṣaṇam proktam puṁso varṇābhivyañjakam
yad anyatrāpi dṛśyeta tat tenaiva vinirdiśet

“If one shows the symptoms of being a *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* or *śūdra*, as described above, even if he has appeared in a different class, he should be accepted according to those symptoms of classification.”

Although we have collected six different evidences from the *Mahābhārata* regarding the eligibility for a person born from any of the *varṇas* to become a qualified *brāhmaṇa* and we have also seen verses from the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* that corroborate this evidence, we will nevertheless quote the conversation between Umā and Maheśvara from the *Mahābhārata* (*Anuśāsana-parva* 163.5, 8, 26, 46, 48,

51, and 59) in order to further strengthen this evidence.

Special Evidence

śrī-umā uvāca

etan me saṁśayaṁ deva vada bhūta-pate 'nagha
trayo varṇāḥ prakṛtyeḥ katham brāhmaṇyam āpnuyuh

maheśvara uvāca

sthito brāhmaṇa-dharmaṇa brāhmaṇyam upajīvati
kṣatriyo vātha vaiśya va brahma-bhūyaḥ sa gacchati

ebhis tu karmabhir devi śubhair ācaritais tathā
śūdro brāhmaṇatām yāti vaiśyaḥ kṣatriyatām vrajet

etaiḥ karma-phalaiḥ devi nyūna-jāti-kulodbhavaḥ
śūdro 'py āgama-sampanno dvijo bhavati saṁskṛtaḥ

karmabhiḥ śucibhir devi śuddhātmā vijitendriyaḥ
śūdro 'pi dvija-vat sevyā iti brahmābravīt svayam

svabhāvaḥ karma ca śubham yatra śūdro 'pi tiṣṭhati
viśiṣṭaḥ sa dvijāter vai vijñeya iti me matiḥ

na yonir nāpi saṁskāro na śrutaṁ na ca santatiḥ
kāraṇāni dvijatvasya vṛttam eva tu kāraṇam

sarvo 'yaṁ brāhmaṇo loke vṛttena tu vidhīyate
vṛtte sthitas tu śūdro 'pi brāhmaṇatvaṁ niyacchati

etat te guhyam ākhyātām yathā śūdro bhaved dvijaḥ
brāhmaṇo vā cyuto dharmād yathā śūdratvam āpnuyāt

“Umā said: O Lord, O sinless master of the living entities, I have some doubt about how members of the three castes—*kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*, and *śūdra*—will attain through their own nature the platform of *brāhmaṇas*.

“Maheśvara replied: If *kṣatriyas* or *vaiśyas* become situated in the behavior of *brāhmaṇas* and spend their lives in the occupations of *brāhmaṇas*, then such persons can attain the position of *brāhmaṇas*.

“O goddess, by the same procedure a *śūdra* can become a *brāhmaṇa* and a *vaiśya* can become a *kṣatriya*.

“By the results of these activities and by becoming an adherent of the *āgama* scriptures, or in other words, by taking initiation through the *pañcarātri*ka system, then a low-born *śūdra* also becomes a *brāhmaṇa*.

“O goddess, Lord Brahmā has personally declared that by performing pure activities, a self-controlled *śūdra* is fit to be served just like a *brāhmaṇa*.

“In my opinion, if pious activities and good character are found in a *śūdra*, it should be understood that he is better than a *brāhmaṇa*.

“Birth, purificatory processes, study of the *Vedas*, and good birth are not the criterion for being a *brāhmaṇa*. The only criterion is one's behavior.

“A person is born as a *brāhmaṇa* in this world simply as a result of his nature. A

śūdra situated in the profession of a *brāhmaṇa* also becomes a *brāhmaṇa*.

“I have thus explained to you the secret of how a person who is born as a *śūdra* becomes a *brāhmaṇa* and how by deviating from his occupational duties a person born in the family of a *brāhmaṇa* becomes a *śūdra*.”

In the *Brahma-sūtras* (1.3.37) it is stated: *tad-abhāva-nirdhāraṇe ca pravṛtteḥ*—

“Whether a person belongs to a *varṇa* other than that of his birth may be ascertained by considering his qualities.”

Pūrṇaprajña Ānandatīrtha (Śrī Madhvācārya) has written in his commentary on the story of Jābāla in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* as follows:

*nāham etad veda bho yad gotro 'ham asmīti satya-vacanena satyakāmasya
śūdratvābhāva-nirdhāraṇe hāridrumatasya na etad abrahmaṇo vivaktum arhatīti tat-
saṁskāre pravṛtteś ca.*

“By Satyakāma's truthful statement, ‘I do not know, sir, which dynasty I belong to,’ Hāridrumata ascertained that he was not a *śūdra* and therefore said, ‘A non-*brāhmaṇa* cannot speak like this.’ He then proceeded to perform the purificatory rituals for him.”

Although there was no evidence that Satyakāma Jābāla was a *brāhmaṇa* by birth, Gautama Ṛṣi accepted him as a *brāhmaṇa* upon hearing his truthful words.

In his commentary on the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, Madhvācārya quotes the following verse from the *Sāma-saṁhitā*:

*ārjavam brāhmaṇe sāksāt śūdro 'nārjava-lakṣaṇaḥ
gautamas tv iti vijñāya satyakāmam upānayat*

“A *brāhmaṇa* possesses the quality of simplicity, and a *śūdra* possesses the quality of crookedness. Knowing this fact, Gautama awarded sacred thread initiation to Satyakāma and made him a first-class *brāhmaṇa*.”

Furthermore, Tribandhana was born in the family of the *kṣatriya* king Māndhātā. Although his son, Triśaṅku, was born as a *kṣatriya*, he became a *caṇḍāla*. This is confirmed in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (9.7.5) as follows:

*tasya satyavrataḥ putras triśaṅkur iti viśrutah
prāptaś caṇḍālatām śāpād guroḥ kauśika-tejasā*

“The son of Tribandhana was Satyavrata, who is celebrated by the name Triśaṅku. Because he kidnapped the daughter of a *brāhmaṇa* when she was being married, his father cursed him to become a *caṇḍāla*, lower than a *śūdra*.”

In the narration regarding Pautrāyaṇa in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (4th *prapāṭhaka*, 2nd *khaṇḍa*) it is stated that although he was not born in the family of a *śūdra*, he became a *śūdra*.

In the *Brahma-sūtras* (1.3.34) it is stated:

śug asya tad-anādara-śravaṇāt tad-ādravaṇāt sūcyate hi.

“When he [Jānaśruti Mahārāja] heard words of condemnation against himself, he became overwhelmed with sorrow and immediately went to take revenge.”

In the Pūrṇaprajña school of philosophy, Śrī Madhvācārya has written in his commentary on this *sūtra* of *Vedānta*:

*nāsau pautrāyaṇaḥ śūdraḥ. śucād dravaṇam eva hi śūdratvam. kambara eṇam etat
santam ity-anādara-śravaṇāt. sahasam jihāna eva kṣattāram uvāceti sūcyate hi.*

“King Pautrāyaṇa was not actually a *śūdra*. One is a *śūdra* if he is overly affected by lamentation. When Pautrāyaṇa heard the disrespectful words, ‘This person is a

spotted deer,' he immediately wanted to retaliate and reply accordingly to the chariot driver. This implies that he was like a *śūdra*.” In his commentary on the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, Śrī Ānandatīrtha Madhvācārya has written:

śucā dravaṇāc chūdraḥ. rājā paturāyaṇaḥ śokāc chūdreti muninoditaḥ. prāṇa-vidyām avāpyāsmāt paraṁ dharmam avāptavān iti pādme.

“One who is overwhelmed by lamentation is a *śūdra*. In the *Padma Purāṇa* it is described that although Paurāyaṇa Mahārāja was a *kṣatriya*, he became overwhelmed with lamentation and thus was declared a *śūdra* by Raikva Muni. Later the king attained the goal of life by learning the confidential meditation on *prāṇa* from Raikva Muni.”

Again [from the *Brahma-sūtras* (1.3.35)] it is stated:

kṣatriyatvāvagateś cottaratra caitrarathena līṅgāt.

“As previously understood from the concluding words of this incident and by using the word *caitraratha*, it is understood that Janaśruti was a *kṣatriya*.”

In his commentary on this *sūtra*, Śrī Madhvācārya has written:

ayaṁ aśvatarī-ratha iti citraratha-sambandhitvena līṅgena paurāyaṇasya kṣatriyatvāvagateś ca. rathas tv aśvatarī-yuktaś catra ity abhidhīyata iti brāhṁe. yatra vedo rathas tatra na vedo yatra no ratha iti ca brahma-vaivarte.

“It is stated in the *Brahma Purāṇa* that because Mahārāja Paurāyaṇa had a mule-driven chariot it is understood he was a *kṣatriya*. The chariot was called a *citraratha* because it was pulled by mules. According to the *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa* wherever the *Vedas* are present a chariot is also, and wherever the *Vedas* are not present, a chariot will not be present.” Because the *citraratha* was present, he is considered a *kṣatriya*. From all these Vedic narrations it is understood that a person's *varṇa* is known by his symptoms.

Prṣadhra, the son of Manu, was the only *kṣatriya* to become a *śūdra* because of unknowingly killing a cow. As stated in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (9.2.9):

*na kṣatra-bandhuḥ śūdras tvam karmaṇā bhavitāmunā
evam śaptas tu guruṇā pratyagrhnāt kṛtāñjaliḥ*

“In your next life you shall not be able to become a *kṣatriya*. Instead, you shall take birth as a *śūdra* because of killing the cow.’ When the hero Prṣadhra was thus cursed by his spiritual master, he accepted the curse with folded hands.”

Diṣṭa was a son of Manu. The son of the *kṣatriya* Diṣṭa was Nābhāga, who became a *vaiśya*. As stated in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (9.2.23):

nābhāgo diṣṭa-putro 'nyaḥ karmaṇā vaiśyatām gataḥ

“Diṣṭa had a son by the name Nābhāga. This Nābhāga, who was different from the Nābhāga described later, became a *vaiśya* by occupational duty.”

Moreover, his descendants gradually became *kṣatriyas*. As described in the *Hari-vaṁśa* (10.30):

nābhāgoriṣṭa-putrās ca kṣatriyā vaiśyatām gatāḥ

“Nābhāga and the sons of Ariṣṭa were *kṣatriyas* but they became *vaiśyas*.”

One's *varṇa* is currently ascertained only by seminal consideration. But the ancient and rational system approved of by scriptures is to ascertain one's *varṇa* by considering one's symptoms. This is not the new imagination of selfish persons.

In his commentary on the *Mahābhārata* (*Vana-parva* 180.25, 26), Śrī Nīlakaṇṭha clearly says:

śūdra-lakṣma kāmādikam na brāhmaṇe 'sti. nāpi brāhmaṇa-lakṣma śamādikam śūdre 'sti. śūdro 'pi śamādy-upeto brāhmaṇa eva. brāhmaṇo 'pi kāmādy-upetaḥ śūdra eva.

“The symptoms of a *śūdra*, such as lust, are not present in a *brāhmaṇa*. Similarly the symptoms of a *brāhmaṇa*, such as peacefulness, are not present in a *śūdra*. A *śūdra* who possesses the quality of peacefulness is certainly a *brāhmaṇa*, and a *brāhmaṇa* who possesses the quality of lust is certainly a *śūdra*.”

In his commentary on *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (7.11.35), Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmīpāda has clarified the above statement as follows:

*śamādibhir eva brāhmaṇādi-vyavahāro mukhyo na jāti-mātrād ity āha yasyeti—
yad yadi anyatra varṇāntare 'pi dṛśyeta tad varṇāntaram tenaiva lakṣaṇa-nimitenaiva
varṇena vinirdiśet na tu jāti-nimittenety arthaḥ*

“The *brāhmaṇas*' main characteristics are qualities such as peacefulness, not birth. If these main characteristics are seen in persons other than those born as *brāhmaṇas*, then such persons should be considered *brāhmaṇas*. They should not be considered according to their caste by birth.”

Many persons who were not born in *brāhmaṇa* families have become *brāhmaṇas* by proper initiation. Innumerable incidents illustrating this fact are known to those who read Indian history. After such persons became qualified and initiated *brāhmaṇas*, their descendants became known as *brāhmaṇas* by virtue of their birth. Today the whole of India is filled with such descendants of *brāhmaṇas*. Even though one became a qualified and properly initiated *brāhmaṇa*, he was still considered a *brāhmaṇa* simply on the basis of his birth. But since nowadays the social system is deformed, such qualified, initiated, seminal *brāhmaṇas* are rarely found.

We heard that in Vārāṇasī there was a learned, unrivaled *sannyāsī* whose name was respected by educated people throughout India. He bestowed *brāhmaṇa* initiation on one of his disciples in whom he saw brahminical qualities. When speaking the name of his *gurudeva*, this disciple would announce that he was awarded the purified status of a *brāhmaṇa* by the power of the sacred thread initiation.

We are now presenting an incomplete list of intellectuals who were born in families lower than *brāhmaṇa* but who were considered *brāhmaṇas* on the strength of their qualifications and thus conferred the status of *brāhmaṇa* on their descendants.

Gādhi was the son of Kuśika of the Candra dynasty. He was the king of Kānyakubja, and his son, Viśvāmitra, although born a *kṣatriya*, became a *brāhmaṇa* on the strength of his austerities.

In the *Mahābhārata* (*Ādi-parva*, Chapter 174) it is stated:

kṣatriyo 'haṁ bhavān vipras tapaḥ-svādhyāya-sādhanaḥ

sva-dharmam na prahāsyāmi neśyāmi ca balena gām

*dhig balaṁ kṣatriya-balaṁ brahma-tejo-balaṁ balaṁ
balābalaṁ viniścitya tapa eva param balaṁ*

tatāpa sarvān dīptaujāḥ brāhmaṇatvam avāptavān

“Viśvāmitra said to Vaśiṣṭha: You are a *brāhmaṇa*, endowed with the qualities of austerity and Vedic study. I am a *kṣatriya*, so on the basis of my nature I will forceably take this cow, Nandinī.

“Later, when Viśvāmitra was defeated, he declared that the strength of the *kṣatriyas* was inferior to the strength of the *brāhmaṇas*. He thus decided that the performance of austerities endowed one with superior strength.

“The greatly effulgent Viśvāmitra thus performed all kinds of austerities and attained the position of a *brāhmaṇa*.”

In the *Mahābhārata* (*Anuśāsana-parva*, Chapter 30) there is the following description of how the *kṣatriya*-born Mahārāja Vītahavya became a *brāhmaṇa*:

<i>evam vipratvam agamad bhṛgoḥ prasādād rājendra</i>	<i>vītahavyo narādhipaḥ kṣatriyaḥ kṣatriyarṣabha</i>
<i>tasya gr̥tsamadaḥ putro sa brahmacārī viprarṣiḥ</i>	<i>rūpeṇendra ivāparaḥ śrīmān gr̥tsamado 'bhavat</i>
<i>putro gr̥tsamadasyāpi varcāḥ (sutejasah) sucetasah putro</i>	<i>sucetā abhavad dvija vihavyas tasya cātmajaḥ</i>
<i>vihavyasya tu putras tu vitatyasya sutaḥ satyaḥ</i>	<i>vitatyas tasya cātmajaḥ santaḥ satyasya cātmajaḥ</i>
<i>śravās tasya sutaś carṣiḥ tamasas ca prakāśo 'bhūt</i>	<i>śravasas cābhavat tamaḥ tanayo dvija-sattamaḥ</i>
<i>prakāśasya ca vāgindro tasyātmajaś ca pramitir</i>	<i>babhūva jayatām varah veda-vedāṅga-pāragaḥ</i>
<i>ghṛtācyām tasya putras tu pramadvarāyān tu ruḥ</i>	<i>ruru-nāmodapadyata putraḥ samudapadyata</i>
<i>śunako nāma viprarṣir</i>	<i>yasya putro 'tha śaunakaḥ</i>

“This is how Mahārāja Vītahavya attained the position of a *brāhmaṇa*: O best of the *kṣatriya* kings, although Vītahavya was a *kṣatriya* by birth, by the mercy of Bhṛgu he became a *brāhmaṇa*. His son Gr̥tsamada was equal in beauty to Indra. He became a *brahmacārī* and a *brāhmaṇa* sage. Sucetā, the son of Gr̥tsamada, also became a *brāhmaṇa*. The son of Sucetā was Varcā, whose son was Vihavya. The son of Vihavya was Vitatya, and his son was Satya. The son of Satya was Santa, whose son was R̥ṣiśravā. The son of R̥ṣiśravā was Tama, and his son, Prakāśa, was the best of the *brāhmaṇas*. The son of Prakāśa was Vāgindra, whose son, Pramiti, was learned in the *Vedas* and Vedic supplements. Pramiti begot Ruru in the womb of Ghṛtācī. In his wife, Pramadvārā, Ruru begot a son named Śunaka, who became a *viprarṣi*. The son of Śunaka was Śaunaka R̥ṣi.” This is the dynasty of Gr̥tsamada. The dynasty of Vītahavya is found in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (9.13.1, 12-27) as follows:

<i>nimir ikṣvāku-tanayo</i>	<i>vaśiṣṭham avṛtartvijam</i>
<i>deham mamanthuḥ sma nimeḥ</i>	<i>kumāraḥ samajāyata</i>

janmanā janakaḥ so 'bhūd	vaidehas tu videha-jah
tasmād udāvasus tasya tataḥ suketus tasyāpi	putro 'bhūn nandivardhanaḥ devarāto mahī-pate
tasmād br̥hadrathas tasya sudhṛter dhṛṣṭaketur vai	mahāvīryaḥ sudhṛt-pitā haryaśvo 'tha marus tataḥ
maroḥ pratīpakas tasmāj devamīḍhas tasya putro	jātaḥ kṛtaratho yataḥ viśruto 'tha mahādhṛtiḥ
kṛtirātas tatas tasmān svarṇaromā sutas tasya	mahāromā ca tat-sutaḥ hrasvaromā vyajāyata
tataḥ śīradhvajo jajñe	yajñārthaṁ karṣato mahīm
kuśādhvajas tasya bhrātā dharmadhvajasya dvau putrau	tato dharmadhvajo nṛpaḥ kṛtadhvaja-mitadhvajau
kṛtadhvajāt keśidhvajaḥ kṛtadhvaja-suto rājann	khāṇḍikyas tu mitadhvajāt ātma-vidyā-viśāradaḥ
bhānumāms tasya putro 'bhūc	chatadyumnas tu tat-sutaḥ
śucis tu tanayas tasmāt ūrjaketuḥ sanadvājād	sanadvājaḥ suto 'bhavat ajo 'tha purujit sutaḥ
ariṣṭanemis tasyāpi tataś citraratho yasya	śrutāyus tat supārśvakah kṣemādhir mithilādhipaḥ
tasmāt samarathas tasya āsīd upagurus tasmād	sutaḥ satyarathas tataḥ upagupto 'gni-sambhavaḥ
vasvananto 'tha tat-putro śrutas tato jayas tasmād	yuyudho yat subhāṣaṇaḥ vijayo 'smād ṛtaḥ sutaḥ
śunakas tat-suto jajñe bahulāśvo dhṛtes tasya	vītahavyo dhṛtis tataḥ kṛtir asya mahāvaśī
ete vai maithilā rājann yogeśvara-prasādena	ātma-vidyā-viśāradaḥ dvandvair muktā gr̥heṣv api

The family descent of Vītahavya:

(1) Brahmā, (2) Manu, (3) Ikṣvāku, (4) Nimi, (5) Janaka, (6) Udāvasu, (7) Nandivardhana, (8) Suketu, (9) Devarāta, (10) Br̥hadratha, (11) Mahāvīrya, (12) Sudhṛti, (13) Dhṛṣṭaketu, (14) Haryaśva, (15) Maru, (16) Pratīpa, (17) Kṛtaratha, (18) Devamīḍha, (19) Viśruta, (20) Mahādhṛti, (21) Kṛtirāta, (22) Mahāromā, (23) Svarṇaromā, (24) Hrasvaromā, (25) Śīradhvaja, (26) Kṛśadhvaja, (27) Dharmadhvaja, (28) Kṛtadhvaja, (29) Keśidhvaja, (30) Bhānumān, (31) Śatadyumna, (32) Śuci, (33) Sanadvāja, (34) Ūrjaketu, (35) Purujit, (36)

Ariṣṭanemi, (37) Śrutāyu, (38) Supārśva, (39) Citraratha, (40) Kṣemādhi, (41) Samaratha, (42) Satyaratha, (43) Upaguru, (44) Upagupta, (45) Vasvananta, (46) Yuyurvān, (47) Subhāṣaṇa, (48) Śruta, (49) Jaya, (50) Vijaya, (51) Ṛta, (52) Śunaka, (53) Vītahavya, (54) Dhṛti, (55) Bahulāśva, and (56) Kṛti. “All these kings of the dynasty of Mithilā were completely in knowledge of their spiritual identity. Thus, by the grace of the supreme master of *yoga*, even though staying at home, they were liberated from the duality of material existence.”

This passage of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* does not mention the Gṛtsamada *brāhmaṇa* dynasty coming from Vītahavya, as described in the *Mahābhārata*. Vītahavya is also addressed in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* as Śaunaka Ṛṣi.

The Kārūṣa *kṣatriyas* descended from Karuṣa, the son of Manu, and the Dhārṣṭa *kṣatriyas*, who descended from Dhṛṣṭa, the brother of Karuṣa, attained the position of *brāhmaṇas*. This is confirmed in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (9.2.16-17) as follows:

karūṣān mānavād āsan kārūṣāḥ kṣatra-jātayah

dhṛṣṭād dhārṣṭam abhūt kṣatram brahma-bhūyam gatam kṣitau

“From Karūṣa, another son of Manu, came the Kārūṣa dynasty, a family of *kṣatriyas*. From the son of Manu named Dhṛṣṭa came a *kṣatriya* caste called Dhārṣṭa, whose members achieved the position of *brāhmaṇas* in this world.” In his commentary on this verse, Śrīdhara Svāmī has written that the word *brahma-bhūyam* means “the position of *brāhmaṇas*.”

Devadatta was the tenth descendant from Nariṣyanta, the son of Manu. The son of the *kṣatriya* Devadatta was Agniveśyāyana, who became a *maharṣi-brāhmaṇa*, thus inaugurating a dynasty of *brāhmaṇas*.

As stated in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (9.2.19-22):

citraseno nariṣyantād ṛkṣas tasya suto 'bhavat
tasya mīḍhvāms tataḥ pūrṇa indrasenas tu tat-sutaḥ

vītihoṭras tv indrasenāt tasya satyaśravā abhūt
uruśravāḥ sutas tasya devadattas tato 'bhavat

tato 'gniveśyo bhagavān agniḥ svayam abhūt sutaḥ
kānīna iti vikhyāto jātūkarṇyo mahān ṛṣiḥ

tato brahma-kulam jātam āgniveśyāyanam nṛpa

(1) Nariṣyanta, (2) Citrasena, (3) Ṛkṣa, (4) Mīḍhvān, (5) Pūrṇa, (6) Indrasena, (7) Vītihoṭra, (8) Satyaśravā, (9) Uruśravā, (10) Devadatta, and (11) Agniveśya. The fire-god Agni himself appeared as Agniveśya, the son of Devadatta. This son, who was a celebrated saint, was well known as Kānīna and Jātūkarṇya. O King, from Agniveśya came a brahminical dynasty known as Āgniveśyāyana.”

Jahnu Muni took birth as the son of Hoṭra of the Candra dynasty. His dynasty is listed in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (9.15.1-4) as follows:

ailasya corvaśi-garbhāt ṣaḍ āsann ātmajā nṛpa
āyuh śrutāyuh satyāyū rayo 'tha vijayo jayah

śrutāyor vasumān putrah satyāyoś ca śrutañjayah
rayasya suta ekaś ca jayasya tanayo 'mitaḥ

bhīmas tu vijayasyātha kāñcano hotrakas tataḥ
tasya jahnuḥ suto gaṅgām gaṇḍūṣī-kṛtya yo 'pibat

jahnos tu purus tasyātha balākaś cātmajo 'jakaḥ
tataḥ kuśaḥ kuśasyāpi kuśāmbus tanayo vasuḥ
kuśanābhaś ca catvāro gādhīr āsīt kuśāmbujaḥ

(1) Candra, (2) Budha, (3) Purūravā, (4) Āyu, Śrutāyu, Satyāyu, Raya, Vijaya and Jaya, (5) Vijaya's son Bhīma, (6) Kāñcana, (7) Hotraka, (8) Jahnu, (9) Puru, (10) Balāka, (11) Ajaka, (12) Kuśa, (13) Kuśāmbu, or Kauśika, and (14) Gādhī. Kṣatravṛddha was the son of Āyurāja, of the Candra dynasty. The son of Āyurāja was Suhotra, whose son was Gṛtsamada. From Gṛtsamada came Śunaka, and from him came Śaunaka, the great saint, the best of those conversant with the Ṛg Veda. This is stated in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (9.17.3) as follows:

kāśyaḥ kuśo gṛtsamada iti gṛtsamadād abhūt
śunakaḥ śaunako yasya bahvṛca-pravaro munīḥ

“[Suhotra had three sons, named] Kāśya, Kuśa and Gṛtsamada. From Gṛtsamada came Śunaka, and from him came Śaunaka, the great saint, the best of those conversant with the Ṛg Veda.” In the dynasty of Puru, the youngest son of Mahārāja Yayati of the Candra dynasty, Kanva Ṛṣi was born. His son was named Medhātithi, from whom the Praskanna brāhmaṇa dynasty came. This is confirmed in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (9.20.1-7) as follows:

pūror vaṁśam pravakṣyāmi yatra jāto 'si bhārata
yatra rājarṣayo vaṁśyā brahma-vaṁśyās ca jajñire

janamejayo hy abhūt pūroḥ pracinvāms tat-sutas tataḥ
pravīro 'tha manusyur vai tasmāc cārupado 'bhavat

tasya sudyur abhūt putras tasmād bahugavas tataḥ
saṁyātis tasyāhamyātī raudrāśvas tat-sutaḥ smṛtaḥ

ṛteyus tasya kakṣeyuḥ sthaṇḍileyuḥ kṛteyukaḥ
jaleyuḥ sannateyuś ca dharma-satya-vrateyavaḥ

daśaite 'psarasah putrā vaneyuś cāvamaḥ smṛtaḥ
ghṛtācyām indriyāṇīva mukhyasya jagad-ātmanah

ṛteyo rantināvo 'bhūt trayas tasyātmajā nrpa
sumatir dhruvo 'pratirathaḥ kaṇvo 'pratirathātmajaḥ

tasya medhātithis tasmāt praskannādyā dvijātayaḥ
putro 'bhūt sumate rebhir duṣmantas tat-suto mataḥ

“O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, descendant of Mahārāja Bharata, I shall now describe the dynasty of Pūru, in which you were born, in which many saintly kings appeared, and from which many dynasties of brāhmaṇas began: (1) Pūru, (2) Janamejaya, (3) Pracinvān, (4) Pravīra, (5) Manusyu, (6) Cārupāda, (7) Sudyu, (8) Bahugava, (9) Saṁyāti, (10) Ahamyāti, (11) Raudrāśva, (12) Ṛteyu, (13) Rantināva, (14) Apratiratha, (15) Kaṇva, (16) Medhātithi, and (17) Praskanna and other

brāhmaṇas. The son of Rantināva named Sumati had a son named Rebhi. Mahārāja Duṣmanta is well known as the son of Rebhi.”

Mahārāja Bharata, the son of Duṣmanta, had no descendants, therefore the Maruts gave Bharadvāja to Bharata as his adopted son. Bharadvāja was born as the fallen son of Bṛhaspati in the womb of Mamatā, the wife of Utathya. Thereafter, as the adopted son of Bharata, Bharadvāja became known as Vitanva. The son of Bharadvāja was Manyu, whose sons were Bṛhatkṣatra, Jaya, Mahāvīrya, Nara, and Garga. The son of Nara was Saṅkṛti, whose sons were Guru and Rantideva. The son of Garga was Śini, who had a son named Gārgya. Here is another example of a *kṣatriya* giving birth to *brāhmaṇas*. This is described in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (9.21.19-21, 30, 31, 33) as follows:

<i>gargāc chinis tato gārgyaḥ</i>	<i>kṣatrād brahma hy avartata</i>
<i>duritakṣayo mahāvīryāt</i>	<i>tasya trayyāruṇiḥ kaviḥ</i>

<i>puṣkarāruṇir ity atra</i>	<i>ye brāhmaṇa-gatiṁ gatāḥ</i>
<i>bṛhatkṣatrasya putro 'bhūd</i>	<i>dhastī yad-dhastināpuram</i>

<i>ajamīḍho dvimīḍhaś ca</i>	<i>purumīḍhaś ca hastinaḥ</i>
<i>ajamīḍhasya vaṁśyāḥ syuḥ</i>	<i>priyamedhādayo dvijāḥ</i>

<i>nalinyām ajamīḍhasya</i>	<i>nīlaḥ śāntis tu tat-sutaḥ</i>
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<i>śānteḥ suśāntis tat-putraḥ</i>	<i>purujo 'rkaś tato 'bhavat</i>
<i>bharmyāśvas tanayas tasya</i>	<i>pañcāsan mudgalādayaḥ</i>

<i>mudgalād brahma-nirvṛttaṁ</i>	<i>gotraṁ maudgalya-saṁjñitam</i>
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“From Garga came a son named Śini, and his son was Gārgya. Although Gārgya was a *kṣatriya*, there came from him a generation of *brahmaṇas*. From Mahāvīrya came a son named Duritakṣaya, whose sons were Trayyāruṇi, Kavi and Puṣkarāruṇi. Although these sons of Duritakṣaya took birth in a dynasty of *kṣatriyas*, they too attained the position of *brāhmaṇas*. Bṛhatkṣatra had a son named Hastī, who established the city of Hastināpura [now New Delhi]. From King Hastī came three sons, named Ajamīḍha, Dvimīḍha and Purumīḍha. The descendants of Ajamīḍha, headed by Priyamedha, all achieved the position of *brāhmaṇas*.

“Ajamīḍha had a son named Nīla by his wife known as Nalinī, and the son of Nīla was Śānti. The son of Śānti was Suśānti, the son of Suśānti was Puruja, and the son of Puruja was Arka. From Arka came Bharmyāśva, and from Bharmyāśva came five sons, headed by Mudgala. From Mudgala came a dynasty of *brāhmaṇas* known as Maudgalya.”

Mahārāja Nabhi, the son of Priyavrata, had a son named Ṛṣabha. Ṛṣabhadeva begot one hundred sons in the womb of His wife, who was given to Him by the King of heaven, Indra. Bharata and his next nine younger brothers became the kings of the nine *varṣas*. Nine sons headed by Kavi and Havi, known as the Nava-yogendras, became Vaiṣṇavas. The other eighty-one sons became *brāhmaṇas*.

This is confirmed in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (5.4.13) as follows:

yavīyāmsa ekāśītir jāyanteyāḥ pitur ādeśa-karā mahā-sālīnā mahā-śrotriya yajña-śīlāḥ karma-viśuddhā brāhmaṇā babhūvuḥ.

“In addition to these nineteen sons mentioned above, there were eighty-one younger ones, all born of R̥ṣabhadeva and Jayantī. According to the order of their father, they became well cultured, well behaved, very pure in their activities and expert in Vedic knowledge and the performance of Vedic rituals. Thus they all became perfectly qualified *brāhmaṇas*.”

It is explained in the *Hari-vaṁśa* (*Hari-vaṁśa-parva* 11.9):

nābhāgādiṣṭa-putrau dvau vaiśyau brāhmaṇatām gatau.

“Nabhaga and the son of Dista, although *vaiśyas*, both became *brāhmaṇas*.” According to their individual natures, among the sons of Gṛtsamada there were *brāhmaṇas* headed by Śaunaka as well as *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas*, and *śūdras*. This is stated in the following words from the *Hari-vaṁśa* (*Hari-vaṁśa-parva* 29.7-8):

*putro gṛtsamadasyāpi śunako yasya śaunakāḥ
brāhmaṇāḥ kṣatriyāś caiva vaiśyāḥ śūdrās tathaiva ca*

In his commentary on this verse, Nilakaṇṭha says: *gṛtsamada-santatau śunakādayo brāhmaṇā anye kṣatriyādayaś ca śūdrāntāḥ putrā jātāḥ*—“Among the offspring of Gṛtsamada, some, headed by Śunaka, were *brāhmaṇas*, some were *kṣatriyas*, some were *vaiśyas*, and some were *śūdras*.”

Apart from his five *kṣatriya* sons, Bali Mahārāja also had sons who founded *brāhmaṇa* dynasties. This is explained in the *Hari-vaṁśa* (*Hari-vaṁśa-parva* 31.33-35) as follows:

*mahā-yogī sa tu balir abhūta nṛpatiḥ purā
putrān utpādayām āsa pañca vaṁśa-karān bhuvi*

*aṅgaḥ prathamato jajñe vaṅgaḥ suhmas tathaiva ca
puṇḍraḥ kaliṅgaś ca tathā bāleyām kṣatram ucyate*

bāleyā brāhmaṇāś caiva tasya vaṁśa-karā bhuvi

“Bali Mahārāja was a great yogi who became a king long ago. He begot five sons in order to increase the population of the earth.

“The first of his five sons was named Aṅga, the second was Vaṅga, the third Suhma, the fourth Puṇḍra, and the fifth was Kaliṅga. These sons were known as Bāleya *kṣatriyas*.

“In the dynasty of Bali there were also Bāleya *brāhmaṇas*, who increased their descendants on the earth.”

The sons of the great sage Kaśyapa were divided into various *varṇas* according to their nature. One can find ample evidence of this in the historical scriptures. It is not a fact that only one born in the family of a *brāhmaṇa* is a *brāhmaṇa* and those qualified as *brāhmaṇas* by initiation and behavior are not *brāhmaṇas*. This has been adequately confirmed by the above-quoted evidence. Even if the truth remains covered due to insufficient study of the *śāstras* and intense selfishness, it will certainly become apparent in due course of time.

In this age of Kali there is often no respect for the truth among persons who are blinded by selfishness. Rather, disqualified persons are rewarded. Anyway, if after seeing all this evidence someone's selfishness is even slightly reduced, it will yield some kind of auspicious result in the world. By its own concocted arguments, an unqualified community can never put real obstacles on the path of qualified

brāhmaṇas.

The *Brahma-sūtra*'s (1.3.28) statement: *ata eva ca nityatvam*—“Therefore it is also eternal,” has been explained as proving that the statements of the *Vedas* are eternal and the disciplic succession of *brāhmaṇas*, who represent the demigods, is also eternal. Although *brāhmaṇas* are “visible demigods,” they are nevertheless eternal servants of Lord Viṣṇu. The *brāhmaṇas*' eternal source of knowledge is the *Vedas*. By studying the *Vedas*, they realize that they are eternal and become situated in the eternal devotional service of the Lord. Many persons become *brāhmaṇa* even though they were not born in families of *brāhmaṇas* engaged in studying the *Vedas*. In order to confirm this statement, Śrīla Jayatīrthapāda, in the sixth generation from Śrīmad Ānandatīrtha Madhvācārya, has cited *vṛścika-tāṇḍulī-nyāya*, the logic of “the scorpion and the rice,” in his *Śrūta-prakāśikā* commentary as follows: *brāhmaṇād eva brāhmaṇa iti niyamasya kva cid anyathātvopapatte vṛścika-tāṇḍulīyakādi-vad iti*.

When the seed of one scorpion is placed in the womb of another scorpion, a scorpion is born—this is the general law of nature. Yet sometimes it is seen that scorpions or other insects are born from rice. Although in this case the placement of seed is not seen, the inconceivable potency of the Absolute Truth, which makes the impossible possible, brings about the scorpions' appearance. Great sages like Vāsiṣṭha, Agastya, Rṣyaśṛṅga, and Vyāsadeva were not *brāhmaṇas* by ordinary standards. Later, however, their descendants, being fully conversant with transcendental knowledge, became recognised as self-realized *brāhmaṇa* Vaiṣṇavas. The various scriptural references describing the qualifications of *brāhmaṇas* and showing respect for *brāhmaṇas* refer to both seminal *brāhmaṇas* and those who have become *brāhmaṇas* by initiation. These references from scriptures on karma, *jñāna*, and *bhakti* do not refer only to seminal *brāhmaṇas*. In no case are *brāhmaṇas* by initiation disregarded. Although in the opinion of some scriptures there is no possibility of becoming an initiated *brāhmaṇa* unless one is a seminal *brāhmaṇa*, this restriction was imposed only because of narrow-minded social traditions. When this narrow-mindedness is given up by deep research and higher education, then the entire world will be illuminated by the glories of the eternal Āryan culture. Then we will understand how futile is the attempt of frogs to fill the universe with the sound of their croaking.

Hari-jana-kāṇḍa Section Concerning the Devotees of Hari

We have already discussed the conceptions of worldly people in the previous chapter. In this present chapter we will discuss the devotees of Lord Hari. In ancient times the Hari-janas and the Prakṛti-janas had a debate over Ajāmila. Due to their nature, Prakṛti-janas tend to consider the Hari-janas to be similar to themselves. In this incident, the Prakṛti-janas finally understood from their master that the Hari-janas are not subjected to the fruits of karma. We are herein quoting some essential points from this narration of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (6.3.25-28) by which we can realize the difference between the Prakṛti-janas and Hari-janas.

prāyeṇa veda tad idaṁ na mahājano 'yam

devyā vimohita-matir bata māyayālam

*trayyām jaḍi-kṛta-matir madhu-puṣpitāyām
vaitānike mahati karmaṇi yujyamānaḥ*

“Because they are bewildered by the illusory energy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Yājñavalkya and Jaimini and other compilers of the religious scriptures cannot know the secret, confidential religious system of the twelve *mahājanas* [or Hari-janas]. They cannot understand the transcendental value of performing devotional service or chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. Because their minds are attracted to the ritualistic ceremonies mentioned in the *Vedas*—especially the *Yajur Veda*, *Sāma Veda* and *Ṛg Veda*—their intelligence has become dull. Thus they are busy collecting the ingredients for ritualistic ceremonies that yield only temporary benefits, such as elevation to Svargaloka for material happiness. They are not attracted to the *saṅkīrtana* movement; instead, they are interested in *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*.

*evam vimṛśya sudhiyo bhagavaty anante
sarvātmanā vidadhate khalu bhāva-yogam*

*te me na daṇḍam arhanty atha yady amīṣāṁ
syāt pātakam tad api hanty urugāya-vādaḥ*

“Considering all these points, therefore, intelligent men decide to solve all problems by adopting the devotional service of chanting the holy name of the Lord, who is situated in everyone's heart and who is a mine of all auspicious qualities. Such persons are not within my jurisdiction for punishment. Generally they never commit sinful activities, but even if by mistake or because of bewilderment or illusion they sometimes commit sinful acts, they are protected from sinful reactions because they always chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

*te deva-siddha-parigīta-pavitra-gāthā
ye sādhaḥ samadr̥ṣo bhagavat-prapannāḥ*

*tān nopasīdata harer gadayābhiguptān
naiṣāṁ vayan na ca vayaḥ prabhavāma daṇḍe*

“My dear servants, please do not approach such devotees, for they have fully surrendered to the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. They are equal to everyone, and their narrations are sung by the demigods and the inhabitants of Siddhaloka. Please do not even go near them. They are always protected by the club of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and therefore Lord Brahmā and I and even the time factor are not competent to chastise them.

*tān ānayadhvam asato vimukhān mukunda-
pādāravinda-makaranda-rasād ajasram*

*niṣkiñcanaiḥ paramahamsa-kulair asaṅgair
juṣṭād gr̥he niraya-vartmani baddha-tr̥ṣṇān*

“*Paramahamsas* are exalted persons who have no taste for material enjoyment and who drink the honey of the Lord's lotus feet. My dear servants, bring to me for punishment only persons who are averse to the taste of that honey, who do not

associate with *paramahंसas* and who are attached to family life and worldly enjoyment, which form the path to hell.”

In *Śrī Nrsimha Purāṇa* it is stated:

*aham amara-gaṇārcitena dhātrā
yama iti loka-hitāhite niyuktaḥ*

*hari-guru-vimukhān praśāsmi martyān
hari-caraṇa-praṇatān namas karomi*

“Yamarāja said: ‘I have been appointed by Lord Brahmā, who is worshiped by the demigods, to judge people's pious and impious activities. I severely punish the worldly fruitive actors who are averse to the spiritual master and Lord Hari, and I offer my obeisances to the Vaiṣṇavas who have surrendered themselves at the lotus feet of Lord Hari.’”

Śrīmad Prabhu Jīva Gosvāmī has quoted the following verse from the *Skanda Purāṇa*, as found in the *Amṛta-sāra*:

*na brahmā na śivāgnīndrā nāhaṁ nānye divaukasah
śaktās tu nīgrahaṁ kartuṁ vaiṣṇavānāṁ mahātmanām*

“Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, Agni, Indra, myself (Yamarāja), and other demigods are unable to chastise the broad-minded Vaiṣṇavas.”

Needless to say, every created living being is subjected to the punishment of the demigods and Yamarāja; only the Vaiṣṇavas are exceptions. (A Vaiṣṇava is respected by he who judges pious and impious actions.)

The *Padma Purāṇa* has stated:

*na karma-bandhanaṁ janma vaiṣṇavānāṁ ca vidyate
viṣṇur anucaratvaṁ hi mokṣam āhur manīṣiṇaḥ*

“Vaiṣṇavas are not bound by fruitive activities or forced to take birth, because learned persons have firmly declared that service to Lord Viṣṇu is itself liberation.” It is stated in the *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa*, *Kṛṣṇa-janma-khaṇḍa*, Chapter 59 as follows:

*vahni-sūrya-brāhmaṇebhyas tejīyān vaiṣṇava sadā
na vicāro na bhogaś ca vaiṣṇavānāṁ sva-karmaṇām*

likhitam sāmni kauthumyām kuru praśnam bṛhaspatim

“The Vaiṣṇavas are always more powerful than Agni, Sūrya, and the *brāhmaṇas*. Vaiṣṇavas do not have to suffer the reactions of fruitive activities or concern themselves with analyzing these activities. This is stated in the *Kauthumī* branch of the *Sāma Veda*. You may ask Bṛhaspati for confirmation of this.”

The Vaiṣṇava devotees of the Supreme Lord are not like ordinary human beings, who are forced to enjoy the results of their karma—this fact is stated in many places in the scriptures. The Vaiṣṇavas are a particular type of incarnation of the Supreme Lord, and therefore they are not enjoyers of the fruits of karma. By the will of the Lord, they appear for the benefit of the people of the world just like an incarnation of the Supreme Lord.

It is stated in the *Ādi Purāṇa* as follows:

aham eva dvija-śreṣṭha nityam pracchanna-vigrahaḥ

bhagavad-bhakta-rūpeṇa lokān rakṣāmi sarvadā

“O best of the *brāhmaṇas*, in My disguised form as a devotee, I always protect the people of this world.

*jagatām guravo bhaktā bhaktānām guravo vayam
sarvatra guravo bhaktā vyaṁ ca guravo yathā*

“Śrī Kṛṣṇa said to Arjuna: The Vaiṣṇavas are the spiritual masters of the entire world, and I am the spiritual master of the Vaiṣṇavas. As I am the spiritual master of everyone, the devotees are also the spiritual masters of everyone.”
In the entire world there is no object as worshipable as the Vaiṣṇavas. The ultimate conclusion of the scriptures is that the Vaiṣṇavas are better than the best, or the topmost ideals in the world.

The *Skanda Purāṇa*, *Utkala-khaṇḍa*, says:

*mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave
svalpa-punyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate*

“Persons who are not very highly elevated in pious activities cannot believe in the remnants of food (*prasāda*) of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, nor in Govinda, the holy name of the Lord, nor in the Vaiṣṇavas.” By the strength of their atheistic temperament, such persons are unable to properly see the Vaiṣṇavas. Unless they are fortunate, the *karmīs*, *jñānīs*, and gross materialists are naturally cheated from achieving the fruit, even when they do see such objects. They are so burdened with their respective rules and regulations that they are unable to lift their heads to look at these four transcendental objects. Being bound by their own narrow-mindedness, such pitiable souls cannot make any progress on the path of devotional service. Although they know that devotees and devotional service are most rare in this world, they make no endeavor to attain them; rather they glorify their own fallen condition, commit offences at the feet of the devotees, and ultimately clear their path for further degradation.

In the *Padma Purāṇa* it is stated:

*arcye viṣṇau śilā-dhīr guruṣu nara-matir vaiṣṇave jāti-buddhir
viṣṇor vā vaiṣṇavānām kali-mala-mathane pāda-tīrthe 'mbu-buddhiḥ*

*śrī-viṣṇor nāmni mantre sakala-kaluṣa-he śabda-sāmānya-buddhir
viṣṇau sarveṣvareṣe tad-itara-sama-dhīr yasya vā nārakī saḥ*

“One who thinks the Deity in the temple to be made of wood or stone, who thinks of the spiritual master in the disciplic succession as an ordinary man, who thinks the Vaiṣṇava in the Acyuta-gotra to belong to a certain caste or creed, who thinks of *caraṇāmṛta* or Ganges water as ordinary water, or who considers the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* to be a material vibration is taken to be a resident of hell.” The difference between devotees and nondevotees is scientifically and philosophically exhibited in these six considerations.

The nondevotees like *karmīs*, *jñānīs*, and whimsical persons think of themselves as dutiful followers of the *smṛti-śāstras*, yet they cannot concur with the transcendental devotees. The practioners of devotional service purify their intelligence, attain the position of Vaiṣṇavas, and give up the desire for and absorption in material enjoyment on the strength of worshiping the transcendental Lord. Controlled by pride and desiring to go to hell, the materialistic non-Vaiṣṇava

householders do go to hell because they have the nature of nondevotees, who are punishable by Yamarāja. Therefore there are always differences between the devotees and nondevotees.

The unfortunate hellish people, bewildered by the material modes, forget their spiritual identity and their spiritual duties. Material greed captures them and sets them on the platform of mundane reputation, and they then claim that there is no devotion for Hari in this world, there are no devotees in the world, there have been only twelve devotees of Hari in the four yugas, and other similarly useless statements that dominate the thoughts of such people. Thus the material kingdom becomes their own asset and course of wanderings. When the ascetics and materialists, following in the footsteps of Hiraṇyakaśipu, who is attached to women, gold, and household, proceed to cheat the world by exhibiting their pride while relishing hog stool-like fame, then such materialism will certainly be vanquished by reciting the statements of Prahlāda Mahārāja. For the benefit of the materialists we herein quote the easy path exhibited and glorified by Prahlāda Mahārāja. By this path the Prakṛti-janas qualify themselves to become Hari-janas. In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (7.5.30-32) it is stated:

*matir na kṛṣṇe parataḥ svato vā
mitho 'bhipadyeta grha-vratānām*

*adānta-gobhir viśatām tamisram
punaḥ punaś carvita-carvaṇānām*

“Because of their uncontrolled senses, persons too addicted to materialistic life make progress toward hellish conditions and repeatedly chew that which has already been chewed. Their inclinations toward Kṛṣṇa are never aroused, either by the instructions of others, by their own efforts, or by a combination of both.

*na te viduḥ svārtha-gatiṁ hi viṣṇum
durāśayā ye bahir-artha-māninaḥ*

*andhā yathāndhair upanīyamānās
te 'pīṣa-tantryām uru-dāmni baddhāḥ*

“Persons who are strongly entrapped by the consciousness of enjoying material life, and who have therefore accepted as their leader or guru a similar blind man attached to external sense objects, cannot understand that the goal of life is to return home, back to Godhead, and engage in the service of Lord Viṣṇu. As blind men guided by another blind man miss the right path and fall into a ditch, materially attached men led by another materially attached man are bound by the ropes of fruitive labor, which are made of very strong cords, and they continue again and again in materialistic life, suffering the threefold miseries.

*naiśām matis tāvad urukramāṅghriṁ
spṛśaty anarthāpagamo yad-arthaḥ*

*mahīyasām pāda-rajo-'bhiṣekaṁ
niṣkiñcanānām na vṛñita yāvat*

“Unless they smear upon their bodies the dust of the lotus feet of a Vaiṣṇava completely freed from material contamination, persons very much inclined toward

materialistic life cannot be attached to the lotus feet of the Lord, who is glorified for His uncommon activities. Only by becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious and taking shelter at the lotus feet of the Lord in this way can one be freed from material contamination.”

The subtle realization of the Vaiṣṇavas is that worldly *brāhmaṇas* who call themselves gurus and engage in fruitive activities and sense enjoyment advertise nondevotional activities as spiritual in such a way that they will never attain freedom from the material world either by becoming disciples or gurus, by maintaining *smārta*, or ritualistic, mentality, or by the help of their *smārta* friends. If, however, they accept the dust from the lotus feet of an advanced *paramahansa* Vaiṣṇava as the supreme goal, then they become freed from the ropes of karma, in the form of worldly brahmanism, and they then take shelter of devotional service to Lord Viṣṇu by giving up advancement in the materialistic way of life, which is the path to hell. Such unalloyed Vaiṣṇavas achieve the transcendental lotus feet of Lord Hari.

The *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (5.12.12) says:

*rahūgaṇaitat tapasā na yāti
na cejyayā nirvapaṇād grhād vā*

*na cchandasā naiva jalāgni-sūryair
vinā mahat-pāda-rajo-'bhiṣekam*

When King Rahūgaṇa was going to visit Kapila Muni in search of the truth and the great soul Bharata was carrying his palanquin, the king submitted to the great devotee Bharata, who then explained how the living entity could attain the highest benefit in the following words:

“My dear King Rahūgaṇa, unless one has the opportunity to smear his entire body with the dust of the lotus feet of great devotees, one cannot realize the Absolute Truth. One cannot realize the Absolute Truth simply by observing celibacy [*brahmacarya*], strictly following the rules and regulations of householder life, leaving home as a *vānaprastha*, accepting *sannyāsa*, or undergoing severe penances in winter by keeping oneself submerged in water or surrounding oneself in summer by fire and the scorching heat of the sun. There are many other processes to understand the Absolute Truth, but the Absolute Truth is only revealed to one who has attained the mercy of a great devotee.”

This instruction expresses the same message as the instructions of Prahlāda Mahārāja to Hiranyakaśipu. The instructions that *smārta* gurus give to the attached householders, those who desire material advancement, the less-intelligent, the followers of the *smṛtis*, those who meditate on Kali with closed eyes, the students, wrestlers, market salesmen, and sense gratifiers, who are all qualified for such instructions, are not at all pleasing to the transcendental, liberated, advanced Vaiṣṇavas. Those who have already attained the highest goal of the *smārta* regulations in their previous life take birth as Vaiṣṇavas in the homes of Hari-janas. To broadcast the glories of mundane ritualists before such persons is simply a matter of arrogance.

In this material creation there are two types of living entities—one is conditioned by the three modes of material nature and the other is transcendental. The conditioned souls who are averse to Lord Hari consider themselves weak, imperfect, controlled by their enemies lust, greed and so on, forced to accept the

results of pious and impious activities, prone to be influenced by the three modes of material nature, eligible for becoming ghosts, materially designated, situated in Devī-dhāma, proud of being materialistic, servants of the demigods, conditioned by matter, and unqualified for serving Lord Hari. They thus praise the nondevotees' philosophy based on the *smṛtis*, which is suitable for fools. The transcendental Hari-janas, however, realize that their Lord is most merciful, omnipotent, and most affectionate to His devotees. Although they consider themselves materialists, they actually realize themselves as eternal servants of Hari, beyond the fruits of karma, beyond the three modes of material nature, eligible for attaining Goloka, devoid of material designations, beyond Devī-dhāma, not of this world, eternal, beyond the control of the demigods, liberated, beyond material prestige such as received by *brāhmaṇas*, endowed with pure brahminical qualities, appreciative of the fact that mundane honor is less valuable than straw, free from false pride, completely tolerant, and ready to offer respects even to insignificant persons. In this way they obtain ecstasy while chanting the names of Kṛṣṇa. Lord Viṣṇu and the Vaiṣṇavas are beyond the material creation. For them, the illusory identification as *brāhmaṇas* of this world is secondary and irrelevant. When a living entity identifies himself as Kṛṣṇa's servant, *māyā* cannot act him. The Lord Himself says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.14):

*daivī hy eṣā guṇa-mayī mama māyā duratyayā
mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etāṁ taranti te*

“This divine energy of Mine, consisting of the three modes of material nature, is difficult to overcome. But those who have surrendered unto Me can easily cross beyond it.”

The servants of the rules and regulations may themselves attain high qualifications, yet they cannot cross beyond *māyā* by their own strength. Only the Vaiṣṇavas on the strength of their devotional service are able to serve the Lord, who is beyond *māyā*. As stated in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (2.7.42):

*yeṣāṁ sa eṣa bhagavān dayayed anantaḥ
sarvātmanāśrita-pado yadi nirvyalīkam*

*te dustarāṁ atitaranti ca deva-māyām
naiṣāṁ mamāham iti dhīḥ śva-śṛgāla-bhakṣye*

“But anyone who is specifically favored by the Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead, due to unalloyed surrender unto the service of the Lord, can overcome the insurmountable ocean of illusion and can understand the Lord. But those who are attached to this body, which is meant to be eaten at the end by dogs and jackals, cannot do so.” Those duplicitous persons who consider “I” and “mine” in relationship with the material body, which is ultimately eaten by dogs and jackals, become Vaiṣṇavas out of fashion while internally maintaining a desire for material happiness. Such persons cannot attain the good fortune of devotional service to the Lord, because they have a fruitive mentality and are still under the influence of *māyā*.

The pleasure-seeking worldly *smārtas* are generally unable to understand the exalted position of a self-satisfied Vaiṣṇava.

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (1.7.10) states:

*ātmārāmās ca munayo nirgranthā apy urukrame
kurvanty ahaitukīm bhaktim ittham-bhūta-guṇo hariḥ*

“All different varieties of *ātmārāmas* [those who take pleasure in *ātmā*, or spirit self], especially those established on the path of self-realization, though freed from all kinds of material bondage, desire to render unalloyed devotional service unto the Personality of Godhead. This means that the Lord possesses transcendental qualities and therefore can attract everyone, including liberated souls.” Therefore devotional service alone is the wealth of the liberated souls.

The *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (4.24.29) also says:

*sva-dharma-niṣṭhaḥ śata-janmabhiḥ pumān
virīṇcatām eti tataḥ param hi mām*

*avyākṛtaṁ bhāgavato 'tha vaiṣṇavaṁ
padaṁ yathāham vibudhāḥ kalātyaye*

“[Lord Śiva said:] A person who executes his occupational duty properly for one hundred births becomes qualified to occupy the post of Brahmā, and if he becomes more qualified, he can approach Lord Śiva. A person who is directly surrendered to Lord Kṛṣṇa, or Viṣṇu, in unalloyed devotional service is immediately promoted to the spiritual planets. Lord Śiva and other demigods attain these planets after the destruction of this material world.”

The *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (3.28.44) states:

*tasmād imām svām prakṛtiṁ daivīm sad-asad-ātmikām
durvibhāvyaṁ parābhāvya svarūpeṇāvatīṣṭhate*

“Thus the yogi [or Hari-jana] can be in the self-realized position after conquering the insurmountable spell of *māyā*, who presents herself as both the cause and effect of this material manifestation and is therefore very difficult to understand.” Materialistic persons who are proud of their *varṇa* and who are puppets in the hands of *māyā* try to act independently while glorifying the wheel of karma, but the devotees know that attempts to become the master of *māyā* are in reality service to *māyā*, which is the cause of bondage, so they give up hellish fruitive mentality and understand the eternal service of the Supreme Lord as their constitutional duty.

By following the principles of *varṇāśrama*, one accumulates pious activities in material life. And by engaging in activities outside of the *varṇāśrama* system in this world one amasses sins. Sinful and pious activities are inevitable for those who proudly consider themselves Prakṛti-janas in this kingdom of desire. This is not the case with the Hari-janas.

In the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (3.3) it is stated:

*yadā paśyaḥ paśyate rukma-varṇam
kartāram īśam puruṣam brahma-yonim*

*tadā vidvān punya-pāpe vidhūya
nirañjanaḥ paramam sāmyam upaiti*

“When a person with transcendental vision, that is, a devotee of the Supreme Lord who has the eyes of devotion, is able to see the Supreme Person—His creator and

master, the Lord of the *brāhmaṇas* whose bodily complexion is golden—then that person is endowed with transcendental knowledge and liberation, uplifted from the material ego. He gives up piety and sin, becoming completely pure and equipoised.”

If one follows a few of the sentiments of Ācārya Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, the king of *tridaṇḍīs* following in the footsteps of Śrī Mahāprabhu, then he can realize who is a Hari-jana and who is a non-Vaiṣṇava engaged in devotional service mixed with karma.

*kaivalyaṁ narakāyate tridaśa-pūr ākāśa-puṣpāyate
durdāntendriya-kāla-sarpa-paṭalī protkhāta-damṣṭrāyate*

*viśvaṁ pūrṇa-sukhāyate vidhi-mahendrādiś ca kīṭāyate
yat kārūṇya-kaṭākṣa-vaibhavavatām taṁ gauram eva stumaḥ*

“For a devotee who has received Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's merciful glance, *kaivalya*, merging into the existence of Brahman, appears hellish, the heavenly planets appear like phantasmagoria, the senses appear like serpents with broken teeth, the entire world becomes a replica of Vaikuṇṭha, and the position of demigods like Lord Brahmā and Lord Indra is considered equal to that of tiny insects. We pray to that Lord, Śrī Gaurasundara.”

*upāsātām vā guru-varya-koṭīr
adhīyatām vā śruti-śāstra-koṭīḥ*

*caitanya-kārūṇya-kaṭākṣa-bhājām
bhavet param sadya rahasya-lābhah*

“Whatever result one achieves by worshiping millions of the best of the wayward *karmī* and *jñānī* spiritual masters or by studying millions of Vedic literatures, we don't care. But by associating with devotees who have received the merciful sidelong glance of Śrī Caitanyadeva one can immediately understand the great secret of pure love for Lord Kṛṣṇa. It is useless for those who are attached to the principles of *varṇāśrama* to accept millions of gurus or study millions of Vedic literatures unless they become unalloyed devotees.”

*kriyāsaktān dhig dhig vikāṭa-tapaso dhik ca yaminah
dhig astu brahmāhaṁ vadana-pariphullān jaḍa-matīn*

*kim etān śocāmo viṣaya-rasa-mattān nara-paśūn
na keṣāñcil-leśo 'py ahaha milito gaura-madhunaḥ*

“Condemned are those who are fond of the Vedic fruitive rituals! Condemned are those self-controlled persons who are fond of severe austerities! Condemned are those persons with material conceptions who nevertheless take pleasure in declaring ‘I am Brahman!’ How much more shall I lament for these *karmīs*, *jñānīs*, and *tapasvīs*, who are absorbed in sense gratification and are just like two-legged animals. Alas! They were not fortunate enough to have tasted even a drop of the nectar of Lord Gaura's *kīrtana*.”

*kālah kalir balina indriya-vairi-vargāḥ
śrī-bhakti-mārga iha kaṇṭaka-koṭi-ruddhaḥ*

*hā hā kva yāmi vikalāḥ kim ahaṁ karomi
caitanya-candra yadi nādyā kṛpām karoṣi*

“Now it is the age of Kali. My enemies headed by the senses are very strong. The beautiful path of *bhakti* to the Supreme Lord is spiked with countless thorns like karma, *jñāna*, and unregulated sense enjoyment. O Lord Caitanyacandra, if You do not bestow Your mercy on me today, then, being confused, where will I go and what will I do?”

*duṣkarma-koṭi-niratasya duranta-ghora-
durvāsānā-nigaḍa-śṛṅkhalitasya gāḍham*

*kliṣyan-mateḥ kumati-koṭi-kadarthitasya
gaurāṁ vinādyā mama ko bhaviteha bandhuḥ*

“I have committed millions of sinful activities while wandering the path of karma. I am tightly bound by the shackles of uncontrollable material desires. My intelligence is afflicted by the misguidance of the *karmīs*, *jñānīs*, and unregulated sense enjoyers. Other than Lord Gaura, who will be my friend in this world?”

*hā hanta hanta paramoṣara-citta-bhūmau
vyarthī-bhavanti mama sādhana-koṭayo 'pi*

*sarvātmanā tad aham adbhuta-bhakti-bījaṁ
śrī-gauracandra-caraṇaṁ śaraṇaṁ karomi*

“Alas! The seeds of millions of karma and *jñāna* rituals have failed to fructify in the barren field of my heart. Therefore I will now take full shelter of the lotus feet of Lord Gauracandra, who is the seed of wonderful devotional service.”

*mṛgyāpi sā śiva-śukoddhava-nāradādyair
āścarya-bhakti-padavī na davīyasī naḥ*

*durbodha-vaibhava-pate mayi pāmāre 'pi
caitanya-candra yadi te karuṇā-kaṭākṣaḥ*

“O Lord Caitanyacandra, O You who enlightens the ignorant, if You grace me with Your merciful glance, then even though I am a wretch I will not be far away from the wonderful path of pure devotion, which is rarely attained by Śiva, Śukadeva, Uddhava, Nārada, and other great souls. Due to their poor fund of knowledge, the *karmīs* understand their inability and become averse to devotional service, but this is not the case with the devotees. Serving Kṛṣṇa is nothing like fruitive work.”

*niṣṭhām prāptā vyavahṛti-tati-laukikī vaidikī yā
yā vā lajjā prahasana-samudgāna-nāṭyotsaveṣu*

*ye vābhūvann ahaha sahaja-prāṇa-dehārtha-dharmā
gaurāś cauraḥ sakalam aharat ko 'pi me tīvra-vīryaḥ*

“My faith in Vedic and ordinary duties, my embarrassment to sing, dance, and laugh, and my natural tendency to be absorbed in material activities for the sustenance of my life air and body have all been forcibly stolen away by the golden-complexioned thief, Gaurahari. When one becomes a Vaiṣṇava, all insignificant endeavors are automatically reduced.”

*patanti yadi siddhayaḥ kara-tale svayaṁ durlabhāḥ
svayaṁ ca yadi sevaki-bhavitum āgatāḥ syuḥ surāḥ*

*kim anyad idam eva vā yadi catur-bhujam syād vapuḥ
tathāpi mama no manāka-calati gaura-candrān manāḥ*

“What to speak if the rarely attained eight mystic perfections—*aṇimā* and so on—fell into my hands without endeavor and the widely-served ideals of enjoyment, the demigods, willingly came to me as my order-carriers offering heavenly pleasures, even if I were awarded the four-armed form of Nārāyaṇa in place of my present material body my mind would still not move an inch from the service of Gaurahari, the Supreme Lord dressed as a devotee.”

The glory and prominence of devotional service is not at all subordinate to karma, *jñāna*, or uncontrolled sense gratification. The devotees firmly believe that they will never fall prey to insignificant greed. But those persons who, due to their duplicitous nature, do not understand the real characteristics of devotional service and who, due to their fruitive mentality, consider devotional service as another category of *karma-kāṇḍa*, quickly commit offenses at the feet of devotees and fall down into the kingdom of sin. As a result of their offenses, they are greatly disturbed by various impediments beginning with caste consciousness, such as considering themselves *brāhmaṇas*, attachment to occupations like giving and receiving charity, and, ultimately, their own envious mentality. These fruitive workers, who are envious of the devotees, are swallowed by false ego in the form of considering Govardhana-śilā, the life and soul of the *paramahamsas*, as stone, considering Vaiṣṇavas as belonging to a particular caste, and lack of faith in the water that has washed the feet of the Hari-janas. The devotees, however, are not greedy, foolish, or weak like them.

*dante nidhāya tṛṇakam padayor-nipatya
kṛtvā ca kāku-śatam etad aham bravāmi*

*he sādhaḥ sakalam eva vihāya dūrād
gauraṅga-candra-carāṇe kurutānūrāgam*

“Taking a straw in my teeth I fall at your feet hundreds of times and humbly appeal to you, saying: O saintly persons! Please give up your path of advancement and its goal, forget about following the principles of *varṇāśrama*, disregard religiousity and irreligiousity, remain equal to pious and impious activities, and do not consider bondage or liberation. Simply cultivate attachment for the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya.”

Unless one possesses unalloyed devotion, he cannot have the good fortune to receive initiation or teachings on devotional service from a spiritual master. If a person is careless, then after obtaining mantras and the process for worshiping the Lord through aural reception, they become the source of material attachment. Those who give up duplicity and properly hear the topics of Hari from a bona fide spiritual master and those whose ears are able to properly receive such topics, only they are able to repeat the same words. The very same mercy and teachings that Tridaṇḍī Prabhu Śrī Prabodhānanda received from Śrīman Mahāprabhu were preserved by him in verses for the benefit of future devotees. Those who have a taste for the mood of Prabodhānanda are worthy of being called Vaiṣṇavas,

otherwise one simply wanders about searching for insignificant eatables like banana stalks, *dāl* balls, and drumsticks.

*strī-putrādi-kathām jahur vivaṣayiṇaḥ śāstra-pravādam budhā
yogīndrā vijahur –marun-niyama-ja-kleśam tapas tāpasāḥ*

*jñānābhyāsa-vidhim jahuś ca yatayaś caitanya-candre parām
āviṣkurvati bhakti-yoga-padavīm naivānya āsīd rasaḥ*

“Now that Lord Caitanyacandra has revealed the path of pure devotional service, the materialists have given up talking about their wives, children, and material affairs, the scholars have given up debating the scriptures, the yogis have given up the trouble to control their breath, the ascetics have given up their austerities, and the impersonalists have given up studying Vedānta. Being attracted by the sweet beauty of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, all the shopkeepers have stopped selling their insignificant wares.” Such is the uncommon influence of devotional service. Until one realizes the beauty of devotional service, he continues to traverse the path of karma, *jñāna*, and sense gratification.”

The poet Sarvajña says:

*tvad-bhaktāḥ saritām patim culuka-vat khadyota-vat bhāskaram
merum paśyati loṣṭra-vat kim aparam bhūmeḥ patim bhr̥tya-vat*

*cintāratna-cayam śilā-śakala-vat kalpa-drumam kāṣṭha-vat
saṁsāram tṛṇa-rāśi-vat kim aparam deham nijam bhāra-vat*

“O my Lord, Your devotee considers the ocean as a palmful of water, the brilliant sun as a firefly, Mount Meru as a stone, a king as a servant, a touchstone as an ordinary stone, a desire tree as ordinary wood, the whole material world as straw, and, above all, his own body as a burden.”

The foolish, materialistic *karmīs*, who are attached to their bodies, consider, “I am this body, and this body is mine,” and thus differentiate between their relatives and others. They see the wonder of material objects and hanker after them.

Vaiṣṇavas, however, do not have such low mentality. They are the best of all persons and therefore cannot be compared with selfish, greedy *karmīs*.

The Vaiṣṇava saint Śrī Mādhava Sarasvatīpāda has stated:

*mīmāṁsā-rajasā malīmasa-dṛśām tāvan na dhīr īśvare
garvodarka-kutarka-karkaśa-dhiyām dūro 'pi vārtā hareḥ*

*jānanto 'pi na jānate śruti-sukham śrī-raṅgi-saṅgād ṛte
su-svādum pariveśayanty api rasam gurvī na darvī spr̥śet*

“Those followers of Jaiminī, Gautama, and Kaṇāda, whose eyes of knowledge have been contaminated by Pūrva-mīmāṁsā and the related *karma-kāṇḍa*, who are proud of being materialistic, whose intelligence is crude, and who have no faith in the Supreme Lord always remain far separated from discussions on the topics of Lord Hari. Due to being bereft of association with the devotees of the Lord, who enjoys pastimes with the goddesses of fortune, such persons cannot relish the nectarean essence of the scriptures even though they understand the purport of the scriptures, just as a spoon is unable to relish the same palatable foodstuffs that it serves.” Materialistic philosophers who carry the burden of sense enjoyment like

asses are devoid of the service attitude towards Śrī Puruṣottama and are thus unqualified for relishing the devotional service of Lord Hari. The *karmīs*, *jñānīs*, and unregulated sense enjoyers are unable to understand the glories of devotional service. The Vaiṣṇavas, however, are not frustrated like the *karmīs*. A Vaiṣṇava saint named Paṇḍita Dhanañjaya has stated:

*stāvakās tava catur-mukhādayo
bhāvakā hi bhagavan bhavādayaḥ*

*sevakāḥ śata-makhādayaḥ surā
vāsudeva yadi ke tadā vayam*

“O Lord Vāsudeva, since four-headed Brahmā, other progenitors of the demigods, and other living entities pray to You, since great yogis like Mahādeva meditate on You, and since Indra, the king of heaven, and the other demigods are Your servants, then who are we? Does this mean that we have no qualification for devotional service?”

Along with this verse, another verse from the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* comes to mind. The *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (1.8.26) states:

*janmaīśvarya-śruta-śrībhir edhamāna-madaḥ pumān
naivārhaty abhidhātum vai tvām akiñcana-gocaram*

“The glories of high birth as a *brāhmaṇa* or demigod, the glories of opulence equal to that of Kuvera, the glories of sages who strictly follow the *Vedas*, and the glories of beauty equal to that of Cupid simply increase the madness of materialists. Therefore, O Hari, You are the Lord of the poor, and as such materially prosperous persons have no taste, opportunity, or qualification for chanting Your holy names.”

Vaiṣṇavism is the only wealth of the poor. False prestige and dominance, which are the assets of nondevotees, are not aspired for by Vaiṣṇavas. The wealth of the Vaiṣṇavas is Lord Hari. Being maddened with excessive material attachment and being either puffed-up from cheap brahminical prestige and learning or from the cheap wealth of the *kṣatriyas* and *vaiśyas*, people disrespect the swanlike Vaiṣṇavas and as a result of sinful activities become nondevotees. Since the Hari-janas, who are poor, fallen, indifferent to material enjoyment, and dedicated to serving Lord Hari, do not desire to accumulate material assets, understanding that desires for high brahminical birth, opulence, knowledge of the *Vedas*, and beauty equal to Cupid are all useless, they therefore engage in chanting the glories of Lord Hari, free from the desires for engaging both in brahmanical ritualistic ceremonies and study of the *Vedas*, both of which aim at sense gratification. In brief, the prestige of *brāhmaṇas* expert in Vedic study, the opulence of *kṣatriyas* having vast wealth, followers, and kingdom, and the prosperity of the *vaiśyas*' wealth and beauty obtained through farming and trade, are not qualifications for becoming a Vaiṣṇava; they are simply means of bondage to material enjoyment, which is due to disinterest in devotional service and which increases one's godlessness. Because the Vaiṣṇavas are not busy for such insignificant things, they are more humble than the straw, more tolerant than a tall tree, not interested in personal prestige, and always ready to respect others. In this way they attain devotional service to Lord Hari. Moreover, after completing their term, the demigods, who are situated on the highest platform in the kingdom of fruitive activities, attain the position of

Vaiṣṇavas due to the influence of their devotion for the Lord. But their exalted position is glorified only for the benefit of the conditioned souls. When material qualifications are exhausted, then one's identification with pure Vaiṣṇavism is awakened. If a powerful person is capable of killing innumerable living entities, yet instead of misusing his power he remains peaceful, that does not mean that he lacks power. Similarly, even though Lord Brahmā and his descendants headed by the *brāhmaṇas* may consider that becoming a Vaiṣṇava is the highest goal of life, the position of a living entity who has actually acquired the taste for serving Kṛṣṇa is even higher. Such persons are confidential associates of the Lord. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Antya 4.66-68) Śrīman Mahāprabhu has instructed Śrī Sanātana as follows:

*nīca-jāti nahe kṛṣṇa-bhajane ayogya
sat-kula-vipra nahe bhajanera yogya*

“A person born in a low family is not unfit for discharging devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, nor is one fit for devotional service simply because he is born in an aristocratic family of *brāhmaṇas*.

*yei bhaje sei baḍa, abhakta—hīna, chāra
kṛṣṇa-bhajane nāhi jāti-kulādi-vicāra*

“Anyone who takes to devotional service is exalted, whereas a nondevotee is always condemned and abominable. Therefore in the discharge of devotional service to the Lord, there is no consideration of the status of one's family.

*dīnere adhika dayā kare bhagavān
kulīna, paṇḍita, dhanīra baḍa abhimāna*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is always favorable to the humble and meek, but aristocrats, learned scholars and the wealthy are always proud of their positions.”

The prestige of high birth promotes material enjoyment. Persons of lower castes, however, are restricted in their ability to enjoy in various ways. Though they are not eligible for material auspiciousness, they have every right and opportunity to attain eternal auspiciousness by serving the Supreme Lord. Even if one who is mad after material enjoyment attains the highest position and facility, it is all temporary and unfavorable for real auspiciousness.

One who serves the Absolute Truth is the best of all, and one who is uninterested in the service of the Absolute Truth simply wastes his time trying to become the master of all temporary activities. He is certainly distinct from and inferior to the real servant of the Absolute Truth.

Worldly education, high birth, and prestige of high position cannot hinder the genuine devotees of the Lord, especially those who accept only what is required rather than being maddened by the spirit of enjoying this world created by shadows. Such self-satisfied, humble devotees, who know the art of engaging everything in the service of the Lord, can actually attain the mercy of the Supreme Lord. And those who try to become more powerful by the help of various opulences like high position, high birth, and material erudition thereby simply exhibit indifference towards receiving the mercy of the Lord. Therefore there is no possibility of their achieving real auspiciousness. Sinful propensities, which increase unwanted nescience, are reflected in the hearts of people and stand in

opposition to the service of the Lord, which is spiritually illuminating. The great devotee Śrī Mādhavendra Purī says:

*sandhyā-vandana bhadram astu bhavato bhoḥ snāna tubhyaṁ namo
bho devāḥ pitaraś ca tarpaṇa-vidhau nāhaṁ kṣamaḥ kṣamyatām*

*yatra kvāpi niṣadya yādava-kulottamasya kaṁsa-dviṣaḥ
smāraṁ smāraṁ aghaṁ harāmi tad alaṁ manye kim anyena me*

“O my prayers three times a day, all glory to you. O bathing, I offer my obeisances unto you. O demigods! O forefathers! Please excuse me for my inability to offer you my respects. Now wherever I sit, I can remember the great descendant of the Yadu dynasty [Kṛṣṇa], the enemy of Kaṁsa, and thereby I can free myself from all sinful bondage. I think this is sufficient for me.”

One devotee emotionally expressed himself to the Lord as follows:

*snānaṁ mlānaṁ abhūt kriyā na ca kriyā sandhyā ca vandhyābhavad
vedaḥ khedaṁ avāpa śāstra-paṭālī saṁtītāntaḥ sphuṭā*

*dharmo marma-hato hy adharma-nicayaḥ prāyaḥ kṣayaṁ prāptavān
cittaṁ cumbati yādavendra-caraṇāmbhoje mamāhar-niśam*

“My daily bath has been contaminated, my activities have been ruined, my *sandhyā* prayers have become fruitless like a barren wife, my study of the *Vedas* has been disturbed, my scriptures have been retired to a box, my religious principles have become afflicted, and my irreligiosity has been diminished, all because the bee of my heart is constantly kissing the lotus feet of Yadavendra, the king of the Yadu dynasty.”

These sentiments of devotees who are free from material existence can never be understood by people who are sinful, low-class, and either regulated or unregulated followers of rituals. If a sinful, fallen living entity guided by the *smṛtis* actually realizes these sentiments of the devotees, then no one can describe his good fortune. Many persons foolishly criticize the short-sighted or blind persons' right and necessity for wearing glasses without realizing the utility of the glasses; similarly the *smārtas* consider the Vaiṣṇavas ordinary living entities like themselves. Actually there is a gulf of difference between the *smārtas* and the devotees. We have already quoted the statements of a few scriptures and the confidential mood of some devotees in this regard. The intelligent Prakṛti-janas will realize the position and respectability of the Hari-janas from these statements. It is stated in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.2.51) as follows:

*na yasya janma-karmabhyāṁ na varṇāśrama-jātibhiḥ
sajjate 'sminn ahaṁ-bhāvo dehe vai sa hareḥ priyaḥ*

“If one does not become proud of one's material body made of skin and flesh in spite of taking an aristocratic birth, such as that of a *brāhmaṇa*, executing pious activities, like giving and accepting charity, and having a prestigious position within *varṇāśrama* society, then one is to be considered the dearest servitor of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

Although Vaiṣṇavas may appear in a family of *brāhmaṇas*, act as *ācāryas*, and be respected by the entire world, they never become proud of their high social order as *brāhmaṇas*, their high social position as *sannyāsīs*, or their seminal or initiated

high caste. Only the *smārtas*, who are attached to fruitive activities, develop strong aversion to Lord Hari due to their excessive attachment to material life. In order to understand the adverse mentality of materialistic *karmīs* one should study the following verse of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.84.13):

*yasyātma-buddhiḥ kuṇape tri-dhātuke
sva-dhīḥ kalatrādiṣu bhauma ijya-dhīḥ*

*yat-tīrtha-buddhiḥ salile na karhicij
janeṣv abhijñeṣu sa eva go-kharah*

“The Supreme Lord said: Anyone who, because of giving up the transcendental realization of a Vaiṣṇava and developing excessive attachment to the material world, accepts this bodily bag of three elements [bile, mucus, and air] as his self, considers the by-products of the body to be his kinsmen, considers material objects as worshipable, considers ordinary bodies of waters as holy places of pilgrimage, and lacks proper understanding of Viṣṇu and the Vaiṣṇavas, is no better than an ass or a cow.” The devotees of the Lord do not praise their intelligence.

One should attentively consider verse 38 from the Fifth Chapter of the *Brahma-saṁhitā*, which says:

*premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena
santaḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣu vilokayanti*

*yaṁ śyāmasundaram acintya-guṇa-svarūpaṁ
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

“I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is Śyāmasundara, Kṛṣṇa Himself with inconceivable innumerable attributes, [whom the materialistic *sahajiyās*—due to their fruitive mentality, enjoying spirit, and mundane imagination—think that they have seen, and] whom the pure devotees [Hari-janas] see in their heart of hearts with the eye of devotion tinged with the salve of love.” The *smārtas* and devotees have different methods and objects of vision, which foolish ordinary people cannot understand.

According to the realization of Ṭhākura Bilvamaṅgala-deva, if such devotion awakens in one's heart, then the mood of a real Hari-jana will automatically manifest in that devotee's heart. As stated in the *Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta* (107):

*bhaktis tvayi sthira-tarā bhagavan yadi syād
daivena naḥ phalati divya-kīśora-mūrtiḥ*

*muktiḥ svayaṁ mukulitāñjali sevate 'smān
dharmārtha-kāma-gatayaḥ samaya-pratīkṣāḥ*

“O my Lord, if one engages in Your pure devotional service [free from karma, *jñāna*, and sense gratification] with determination, You become visible in Your original transcendental youthful form as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As far as liberation is concerned, she stands before the devotee with folded hands waiting to render service. Religion, economic development and sense gratification [which are difficult to achieve for nondevotees with material desires] are all automatically attained without separate endeavor.”

The *smārtas*, or nondevotees who are simply attached to rules and regulations, are content with the fruits of the four aims of life—religion, economic development, sense gratification, and liberation. Yet these four principles naturally and submissively remain under the feet of the Hari-janas. The Hari-janas are liberated persons, so they have no enthusiasm for conditioned life.

When do the *karmīs* give up their occupational duties and understand the glories of devotional service to the Lord? The *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.14.14) gives the following illustration:

*na pārameṣṭhyam na mahendra-dhiṣṇyam
na sārvabhaumam na rasādhipatyam*

*na yoga-siddhīr apunar-bhavam vā
mayy arpitātmeccati mad vinānyat*

“The Supreme Lord said: The devotee who has offered his soul to Me does not want anything if it is separate from Me—not the position of the supreme demigod of the universe, Brahmā, nor that of Lord Indra, nor kingship over the entire earth or over the lower planetary systems, nor the mystic perfections of yoga, nor even freedom from the cycle of rebirth.” These are constitutional symptoms of devotees. Śrī Hari is the only goal and objective of the Hari-janas. Others naturally become bewildered by the good birth and education of the *brāhmaṇas* or by the wealth, opulences, and success in trade of the *kṣatriyas* and *vaiśyas*. The feelings and behavior of nondevotees are completely different to the feelings and behavior of devotees. The former are influenced by contamination and lamentation, whereas the later are full of ecstasy in the service of Hari.

The saint Kulaśekhara Ālvār (a perfect devotee), who was the king of Kerala, has stated:

*nāsthā dharme na vasu-nicaye naiva kāmopabhoge
yad bhāvyam tad bhavatu bhagavan pūrva-karmānurūpam*

*etat prārthyam mama bahu matam janma-janmāntare 'pi
tvat-pādāmbhoruḥa-yuga-gatā niṣcalā bhaktir astu*

“My Lord, I have no attraction for performing religious rituals or holding any earthly kingdom. I do not care for sense enjoyments; let them appear and disappear in accordance with my previous deeds. My only desire is to be fixed in devotional service to Your lotus feet, even though I may continue to take birth here life after life.”

According to the nondevotees, the three aims of religion, economic development, and sense gratification are to be enjoyed and the fourth aim, liberation, is the ultimate goal of life, but the Vaiṣṇava Kulaśekhara Ālavar thinks, “Let them come on their own accord,” as he considers the eternality of devotional service in the following words:

*maj-janmanah phalam idam madhu-kaiṭabhāre
mat-prārthanīya-mad-anugraha eṣa eva*

*tvad-bhṛtya-bhṛtya-paricāraka-bhṛtya-bhṛtya-
bhṛtyasya bhṛtya iti mām smara loka-nātha*

“O enemy of Madhu and Kaiṭabha, O Lord of the universe, the perfection of my life and my heartfelt prayer is that You consider me the servant of the servant of the servant of the servant of the servant of Your servant.”

In summary, we can say that Kulaśekhara, the king of Kerala and ornament of the *kṣatriya* dynasty, did not pray to become a *brāhmaṇa*. He was always eager to attain the eternally glorious position of a devotee of the Lord. This great personality was a spiritual master in the Śrī Rāmānuja-sampradāya and an incarnation of a devotee. Mahātmā Yāmuna Muni [Yamunācārya] has written:

*na dharma-niṣṭho 'smi na cātma-vedī
na bhaktimāms tvac-caraṇāravinde*

*akiñcano 'nanya-gatiḥ śaraṇya
tvat-pāda-mūlaṁ śaraṇaṁ prapadye*

*tava dāsyā-sukhaika-saṅginām
bhavaneṣv astv api kīṭa-janma me*

*itarāvasatheṣu mā sma bhūd
api me janma catur-mukhātmanā*

“O Hari, You are the object of my surrender. I have no faith in *varṇāśrama-dharma*, and I have no knowledge of the soul. Furthermore, I have no devotion to Your lotus feet. I am utterly destitute, a rogue with no idea of the goal of life. Therefore I take shelter of Your lotus feet. O my Lord, I think it is better to be born as an insect in the house of a Vaiṣṇava, than to be born as Lord Brahmā in the house of a nondevotee.”

Although this *mahātmā* was recognised as a seminal *brāhmaṇa*, the extent to which he accepted subordination to his spiritual master, Bakulābharaṇa Śaṭhakopa, who was considered a seminal *śūdra*, incarnation of devotee, and perfect Vaiṣṇava associate of the Lord, is understood from *Stotra-ratna* (7), wherein he declares:

*mātā pitā yuvatayas tanayā vibhūtiḥ
sarvaṁ yad eva niyamena mad-anvayānām*

*ādyasya naḥ kula-pater bakulābhirāmaṁ
śrīmat-tad-aṅghri-yugalaṁ praṇamāmi mūrdhnā*

“I reverently bow my head to the blessed feet, attractive as *bakula* flowers, of Śaṭhakopa, the first *ācārya* of our devotional family. For our disciplic succession His lotus feet are everything—our father, mother, son, wife, and wealth.”

Even after discussing the devotion that was shown to Śaṭhakopa by the sage Śrī Ālabandaru, who was born in a very prestigious *brāhmaṇa* family, persons with insignificant *smārta* conceptions nevertheless claim to be Vaiṣṇavas in order to fill their bellies while avoiding Vaiṣṇava association and arrogantly disrespecting Śrī Śrī Viṣṇupāda Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī Prabhu; yet if they are able to understand that the soothing lotus feet of Śrī Dāsa Raghunātha Prabhu are the only refuge for their mothers, fathers, wives, sons, opulences, and respect, then they will achieve devotion to Kṛṣṇa by the mercy of Śrī Yamunācārya. Otherwise they will simply prove their aversion to Hari and rejection of their guru.

Ācārya Śrī Rāmānuja has stated:

*vaiṣṇavānam ca janmāni nidrālasyaṇi yāni ca
dṛṣṭvā tāny aprakāśyaṇi janebhya na vadet kvacit
teṣāṃ doṣān vihāyāṣu guṇāṃś caiva prakīrtayet*

“(For the auspiciousness of the world and the benefit of neophytes:) Even if one knows about a Vaiṣṇava's birth, sleeping habits, and laziness, one should not (in order to proudly criticize) disclose these things in public. Rather than finding faults, one should glorify the Vaiṣṇava's qualities.”

The definitions for both Vaiṣṇavas and *smārtas* are given in the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (1.1.4-5 and 3.1.1-3) as follows:

*dve vidye veditavya iti, ha sma yad brahma-vido vadanti, parā caivāparā ca.
tatrāparā ṛg-vedo yajur-vedaḥ sāma-vedo 'tharva-vedaḥ śikṣā kalpo vyākaraṇam
niruktaṃ chando jyotiṣam iti. atha parā yayā tad-akṣaram adhigamyate.*

“Śaunaka said: There are two kinds of educational systems. The knowers of supreme truth who understand the taste of the Absolute say that one of these kinds of education deals with transcendental knowledge [*parā vidyā*] and the other with worldly knowledge [*aparā vidyā*]. The *Ṛg Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, *Sāma Veda*, *Atharva Veda*, and their corollaries known as the ritual *kalpa* scriptures comprised of the *sūtras* and so on, the *śikṣā* scriptures explaining the places and methods of pronunciations of letters, the *vyākaraṇa* grammar scripture teaching the proper use of words, the *nirukta* scripture teaching the derivation of the meaning of words, the *chanda* scriptures concerning meters, and the astronomical *jyotiṣa* scriptures concerning the correct ascertainment of time—these all belong to the inferior system of material knowledge [*aparā vidyā*]. These are honored by the nondevotees. If one studies these literatures with the spirit of enjoyment, he will simply be bound up as a ritualistic student of the scriptures. That potency of scriptural knowledge by which one can understand the *akṣara*—Brahman or the Absolute Truth—is the higher education, *parā-vidyā*. When a person retires from the worldly conceptions of the *smārtas*, he becomes eligible for *parā vidyā*, spiritual education. He then accepts Viṣṇu as his only self-interest, and thus becomes a Vaiṣṇava.”

*dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā
samānam vṛkṣam pariśasvajāte*

*tayor anyañ pippalam svādv atty
anaśnann anyo 'bhicākaśīti*

*samāne vṛkṣe puruṣo nimagno
'nīśayā śocati muhyamānaḥ*

*juṣṭam yadā paśyaty anyam īśam
asya mahimānam eti vīta-śokaḥ*

*yadā paśyaḥ paśyate rukma-varṇam
kartāram īśam puruṣam brahma-yonim*

*tadā vidvān puṇya-pāpe vidhūya
nirañjanaḥ paramam sāmyam upaiti*

“There are two spiritual birds sitting together in a banyan tree. They are bound

together by friendship. One of them is being supported by the other, his supporter. The two spiritual birds are the devotee *jīva* and the Supreme Lord, both sitting on the same banyan tree of the material body. Of the two, the *jīva* bird is eating the banyan fruits born from the body as the fruits of its karma, thinking them sweet tasting. The other bird, the Supreme Lord, does not partake of the fruits Himself but facilitates the eating of the other bird, who is enjoying the fruits.

“One bird (the living entity) considers his material body in terms of ‘I’ and ‘mine.’ Having no devotion for the Lord, he is afflicted with lamentation as the result of his karma. In this way, such a *karma-kāṇḍa smārta*, being averse to the service of the Lord, spends his whole life suffering material miseries. But as soon as the living entity gives up his *smārta* mentality and his desire for fruitive results, he immediately understands that the other bird, the transcendental Lord Viṣṇu, is distinct from all material enjoyable objects; thus realizing the eternal nature of the Lord's service, he becomes free from lamentation and comes to know the glories of the Lord's pastimes.” The platform of Vaiṣṇavism is attained when one realizes that he is an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, and the platform of desirelessness is reached when one gives up the desire for enjoying the fruits of karma. Only when the *jīva* becomes a Vaiṣṇava does he become pure and liberated.

“When, upon achieving devotion to Viṣṇu, the completely purified *jīva* realizes his position as servant of the Lord and is able to see the golden-bodied creator of the universe, Hiranyagarbha, then he gains the fruit of higher education. He completely gives up sin and piety, which were born from the worldly mentality of his lower education, and becomes altogether pure and transcendently equal with the Lord.”

When a living entity is conditioned, he develops the mentality of a *smārta*, and when he is liberated, he develops the mentality of a servant of Hari. This is the only purport of the *Vedas*.

In the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* it is stated:

<i>viṣṇoḥ tu trīṇi rūpāṇi</i>	<i>puruṣākhyāny atho viduḥ</i>
<i>ekam tu mahataḥ sraṣṭṛ</i>	<i>dvitīyaṁ tv aṇḍa-saṁsthitaṁ</i>
<i>trītīyaṁ sarva-bhūta-sthaṁ</i>	<i>yāni jñātvā vimucyate</i>

“Lord Nārāyaṇa has three *avatāras* called *puruṣas*. Nārāyaṇa is the source of the *catur-vyūha* and the Lord of all Vaikuṇṭhalokas, wherein there is no trace of *māyā*. Māyā, who is indirectly sheltered by Nārāyaṇa, is prominent on the other side of the Virajā. Śrī Nārāyaṇa's *puruṣa* incarnations manifest for the purpose of empowering Māyā's creation of Devī-dhāma. The first *puruṣa-avatāra* is Mahā-Viṣṇu, who lies on the Causal Ocean and is the cause of the *mahat-tattva* and false ego. The second *puruṣa-avatāra* is Hiranyagarbha Viṣṇu, who lies on the Garbhodaka Ocean and from whose navel grows a lotus stem upon which the *guṇa-avatāra* Brahmā is born and engaged in creating the universe, which is annihilated by the *guṇa-avatāra*, Rudra. The third *puruṣa-avatāra* is localised Lord Viṣṇu, who lies on the Kṣīrodaka Ocean and who is worshipable by all living beings. If a conditioned *smārta* can serve these three *puruṣa-avatāras*, he will be liberated from the clutches of the three modes of nature and become a Vaiṣṇava.” Viṣṇu is the eternal master of Māyā. Though the *puruṣa-avatāras* have a relationship with Māyā, They are not controlled by Māyā like the conditioned souls. Other than the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu, all living entities are eligible for being controlled by Māyā, even though they are constitutionally servants of Viṣṇu. By

surrendering to Lord Viṣṇu, the Vaiṣṇavas are no longer eligible to be controlled by Māyā. Only nondevotees like the *smārtas* are eligible to be controlled by Māyā and forced to accept the results of karma.

In the *Skanda Purāṇa*, *Revā-khaṇḍa*, Durvāsā speaks to Nārada as follows:

nūnam bhāgavatā loke loka-rakṣā-viśāradāḥ
vrajanti viṣṇunādiṣṭā hr̥di-sthena mahā-mune

bhagavān eva sarvatra bhūtānām kṛpayā hariḥ
rakṣaṇāya caran lokān bhakta-rūpeṇa nārada

“O great sage Nārada, pure devotees who are expert in protecting the interest of people wander in this world under the instructions of Lord Viṣṇu, who is situated in everyone's heart. In order to protect the living entities, Lord Hari accepts the form of a devotee and appears in this world out of His causeless mercy.”

We can see from the pastimes of Lord Śrī Rāmacandra that even though He was omnipotent, He acted like a devotee by respecting worldly morality. He did not allow anyone to engage in any kind of illicit activities that people were inclined to; rather He accepted all rules and regulations like an ordinary mortal being. In this way He benefited all the passionate and ignorant living entities.

In the *Garuḍa Purāṇa* it is said:

kalau bhāgavatam nāma durlabham naiva labhyate
brahma-rudra-padoṭkr̥ṣṭam guruṇā kathitam mama

yasya bhāgavatam cihnam dr̥śyate tu harir mune
gīyate ca kalau devā jñeyās te nāsti saṁśayaḥ

“Due to their fruitive mentality, the majority of foolish people in Kali-yuga do not come forward to take up the principles of *bhāgavata-dharma*. Therefore pure devotees are very rare. The position of a pure devotee is superior to that of the great demigods like Brahmā and Mahādeva. This is what my spiritual master has told me. If one follows the principles of *varṇāśrama* for one hundred lifetimes, as a result of his pious activities he can attain the position of Lord Brahmā, but the position of a Vaiṣṇava is more exalted. O sage, know without doubt that anyone in the age of Kali who possesses the symptoms of a pure devotee and constantly engages in chanting the holy names is a godly personality.”

In the *Skanda Purāṇa* it is stated:

śrī-kṛṣṇa-stava-ratnoghair yeṣāṁ jihvā tv alaṅkṛtā
namasyā muni-siddhānām vandanīyā divaukasām

“Those great Vaiṣṇavas whose tongues are decorated with jewel-like prayers to Kṛṣṇa are respected by the perfected beings, the ascetics, the *brāhmaṇas*, and the sages and worshipable for the demigods.”

According to the materialistic conceptions of the *smārtas*, these statements are poetic exaggerations. Such a conception, however, is the result of their sinful activities. Due to their offenses at the feet of the Vaiṣṇavas, they are unable to understand the Vaiṣṇavas' prestigious position, and instead of glorifying the Vaiṣṇavas, they glorify the status of other fruitive workers. Because the *karmīs* offer obeisances to the perfect sages and worship the highly placed residents of heaven, they are under the influence of material desires and not interested in the

worship of Lord Hari or in the topmost position of Hari's devotees.
It is stated in the *Ādi Purāṇa*:

vaiṣṇavān bhaja kaunteya mā bhajasvānya-devatāḥ

“O son of Kuntī, worship only the Vaiṣṇavas; do not worship any demigods.”
There is no one more worshipable in the heavenly planets, the earthly planets, or in the entire creation than the Vaiṣṇavas. Only *karmīs* with material desires give up the worship of Vaiṣṇavas and, being attached to household life in this miserable material existence, become disinterested in the service of the Vaiṣṇavas. They consider the characteristics of nondevotees to be superior. This is the result, or punishment, of their karma.

Who are the Hari-janas, or Vaiṣṇavas, and what makes them different from the nondevotees? I am quoting various evidence from the scriptures and sentiments of devotees in this *Hari-jana-khaṇḍa* to answer these questions.

Before acquiring material designations, the living entity is supremely pure. Even though he is not engaged in serving the Supreme Lord, he remains situated in the neutral position of *śānta-rasa* due to his marginal nature. Though the living entity born from the marginal potency does not at that time exhibit a taste for serving the Lord due to a lack of knowledge of self-realization, his direct propensity of serving the Supreme Lord nevertheless remains within him in a dormant state. Though the indirect propensity of material enjoyment, which is contrary to the service of the Lord, is not found in him at that time, indifference to the service of Hari and the seed of material enjoyment, which follows that state of indifference, are nevertheless present within him. The living entity, who belongs to the marginal potency, cannot remain indifferent forever by subduing both devotional and nondevotional propensities. He therefore contemplates unconstitutional activities from his marginal position. As a sleeping person dreams that he is active in the physical world without actually being involved in activities, when the dormant indifferent living entity of the marginal potency exhibits even a little apathy to the service of the Supreme Lord and situates himself in a neutral, unchanging condition for even a little time, he is infected by impersonalism. That is why the conditioned soul desires to merge in the impersonal Brahman, thus exhibiting his mind's fickle nature. But due to neglecting the eternal service of the Lord and thereby developing the quality of aversion to the Lord, he cannot remain fixed in that position. In this way aversion to the Lord breaks his concentration of mind and establishes him as the master of this world of enjoyment.

Māyā, the external energy of the Supreme Lord, then induces the marginal living entity to enjoy this world through her covering and throwing potencies and thus shows the living entity the reality of being averse to the Lord's service. At that time the living entity considers himself the king of enjoyers, and being situated in the mode of passion he takes the position of *Brahmā* and creates progeny. The living entities who are born from *Brahmā*, the grandfather of everyone, expand themselves in families of *Āryans* and *brāhmaṇas*. In this world of duality, however, living entities who are covered and thrown under the control of the external energy naturally become envious. This enviousness further creates pride, illusion, greed, anger, and lust and induces the living entities to dance frantically in aversion to the Lord. At that time they forget both that they were born from Grandfather *Brahmā* and the Lord's instructions in the *Vedas*.

And on the platform of progress, if a living entity cultivates transcendental sound

vibration and revives the process of remembering the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, he then achieves scientific spiritual knowledge. By this process, all *anarthas* are destroyed and he becomes situated in a supremely auspicious position. The mood that arises when one is manipulating his senses is called *vilāsa*, or enjoyment. The meaning of *vairāgya*, or renunciation, is to become averse to the accumulation of sensual knowledge. The conditioned souls who are overwhelmed by the illusory energy of Hari become temporary enjoyers of this world under the control of Māyā's covering and throwing potencies. But if such persons fortunately meet devotees who are constantly remembering Kṛṣṇa, then they can give up insignificant material enjoyment and receive the opportunity to attain transcendental knowledge.

Although due to forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa the perverted movement of the senses is considered temporary and adverse, when they are properly employed in eternal subjects their disease of transience is destroyed and they give up the desire to embrace such transient objects. Then that person appreciates the following verse from the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, which is the mercy of Śrī Sanātana and compiled by Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, the disciple of Tridaṇḍīpāda Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, who was a servant of Śrī Gaurāṅga and born in an Āndhra *brāhmaṇa* family.

grhīta-viṣṇu-dīkṣāko viṣṇu-pūjā-paro narah
vaiṣṇavo 'bhīhito 'bhijñair itaro 'smād avaiṣṇavaḥ

“One who is initiated into Śrī Viṣṇu's mantras and who is devoted to worshipping Lord Viṣṇu is called a Vaiṣṇava by those who are learned. One who is devoid of these practices is not a Vaiṣṇava.”

Although the eternal living entity is constitutionally favorably inclined towards the Supreme Lord, due to his indifference towards the eternal service of the Lord he is eligible for being controlled by *māyā*. When one tries to measure material objects with his sensual knowledge, he simply increases his enjoying propensity day after day. That he is eligible for achieving transcendental knowledge—this ancient memory he also often forgets. As a result of being covered and thrown and considering himself the enjoyer of this world, such a person has no power to discriminate between good and bad, rather he considers temporary and unreal subjects as permanent and favorable for his enjoyment.

In order to eradicate the misfortune of the living entities, who are created by His marginal potency, the most merciful Lord in His forms as the Supersoul and the exalted spiritual master reveals the true identity of the soul. Due to this good fortune, with a small endeavor to achieve transcendental knowledge the conditioned soul gives up his propensity for enjoyment and renunciation and develops some taste for serving the Lord. If he develops a taste for receiving the mercy of a great liberated personality, who is pure, eternally engaged in service, self-realized, and the only shelter for the living entities, then his lost Kṛṣṇa consciousness is revived. Thereafter he desires freedom from Māyā's covering and throwing potencies and searches after his own auspiciousness. As a result of this, he attains transcendental knowledge. The desire for achieving transcendental knowledge induces him to cultivate favorable service to Lord Viṣṇu. This cultivation begins with endeavoring for self-realization, reviving his lost propensity of service, and, ultimately, being reestablished as the servant of the Lord. Then he is no longer considered a nondevotee, averse to the Lord. Unfortunate people who are offensive and devoid of service to the spiritual master

and Vaiṣṇavas fall from the highest position and again become enjoyers. They then feel proud of advertising themselves as *prākṛta-sahajiyās* and become bound by the ropes of material conceptions. At that time they become totally aloof from following the great devotees and the system of *Pañcarāta*. In this way people who thus cheat themselves become misguided. Ṭhākura Śrīla Narottama has warned the devotee communities about these pseudo-devotees.

People who follow the principles of the *prākṛta-sahajiyās* establish themselves as Vaiṣṇavas, and though they fall down according to the opinion of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.2.32), *āruhya kṛcchreṇa param padam*, they nevertheless declare that their nonsense activities are the transcendental pastimes of a Vaiṣṇava.

Although Śrīmān Mahāprabhu has said that being proud of one's *varṇa* or *āśrama* is the business of the Prakṛti-janas, because the conditioned souls disregard this instruction of the Lord they become nondevotees, bound by the fruits of their karma. The following verse, composed by Mahāprabhu and quoted in *Padyāvalī* (63), is not recited by such self-deluded persons.

*nāhaṁ vipro na ca nara-patir nāpi vaiśyo na śūdro
nāhaṁ varṇī na ca gr̥ha-patir no vanastho yatir vā*

*kintu prodyan-nikhila-paramānanda-pūrnāmṛtābdher
gopī-bhartuḥ pada-kamalayor dāsa-dāsānudāsah*

“I am a pure spirit soul. I am not a *brāhmaṇa*, I am not a *kṣatriya*, I am not a *vaiśya* or a *śūdra*. Nor am I a *brahmacārī*, a householder, a *vānaprastha* or a *sannyāsī*. I identify Myself only as the servant of the servant of the servant of the lotus feet of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the maintainer of the *gopīs*. He is like an ocean of nectar, and He is the cause of universal transcendental bliss. He is always existing with brilliance.” When the four types of liberated persons become weak in their conviction that they are the eternal servants of Kṛṣṇa, then they again face danger in their path to self-realization. Therefore as soon as a living entity gives up the self-identification of being a Hari-jana, he immediately falls into the category of Prakṛti-jana and becomes falsely proud of himself. Then he can no longer remain a Hari-jana. The Hari-janas who have lost their devotion to Hari due to forgetfulness of their constitutional position are like *soṇāra pāthera bāṭīs*—“stone bowls made of gold,” for they are actually Prakṛti-janas or *prākṛta-sahajiyās*. Their entrance into the natural, transcendental abode of Vaikuṇṭha is checked. The Hari-janas who have forgotten their constitutional position cannot understand the difference between the transcendently pure Hari-janas and the Prakṛti-janas. Due to a lack of real knowledge of the scriptures, they identify persons born in low-class families as Hari-janas and themselves as Prakṛti-janas born in high-class families. In this way they waste their time.

We will now describe the divisions of Hari-janas. Indian historians have collected from various scriptures twelve categories of Hari-janas such as *sātvata*, *bhakta*, *bhāgavata*, Vaiṣṇava, *pañcarātrika*, Vaikhānasa, and *karma-hīna*. But at present all of these categories are practically lost, leaving a rough division of two categories. Those who are devotees of Hari can still discern the two paths of *arcana* and *bhāva*. Of the four principal Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*, Śrī Madhvācārya and Śrī Nimbāditya are on the path of *bhāgavata-mārga*, or *bhāva-mārga*, and Śrī Rāmānujācārya and Śrī Viṣṇusvāmī are Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* on the path of *pañcarātrika-arcana-mārga*. Though the respected Śrī Madhvācārya and Śrī Nimbāditya were *bhāgavatācāryas*, they nevertheless also accepted the path of *arcana*, meant for the *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs*, and Śrī Rāmānujācārya also accepted the chanting of the holy names as a

part of his *arcana* rituals. Śrī Viṣṇusvāmī was the first commentator on the *Vedānta-sūtras*. These four personalities have been accepted as the four *sampradāya ācāryas*. At this juncture we are quoting Śrīdhara Svāmī's commentary on the beginning of the Third Canto of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*.

dvedhā hi bhāgavata-sampradāya-pravṛttiḥ. ekataḥ saṅkṣepataḥ śrī-nārāyaṇād brahma-nāradādi-dvāreṇa. anyatas tu vistarataḥ śeṣāt sanat-kumāra-sāṅkhyāyanādi-dvāreṇa.

“There are two ways in which the Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas* originated. The first of these has come from Nārāyaṇa by way of Brahmā, Nārada, and so on. The other comes from Lord Śeṣa through Sanat-kumāra and then Sāṅkhyāyana Muni.” Needless to say, the personalities in the above-mentioned *sampradāyas* are all Vaiṣṇavas. As confirmed in the *Padma Purāṇa, Uttara-khaṇḍa*, in the following words:

*yad viṣṇūpāsanā nityaṁ viṣṇur yasyeśvaro mune
pūjyo yasaiko viṣṇuḥ syād iṣṭo loka sa vaiṣṇavaḥ*

“O sage, one who always worships Lord Viṣṇu and whose eternal Lord, only object of worship, and goal of life is Viṣṇu is known in this world as a Vaiṣṇava.”

Actually, the categories of Hari-janas are established according to two principal tastes. We should refer to the analysis of the two categories, *pañcarātriaka* and *bhāgavata*, given by Śrīpāda Jīva Gosvāmī Prabhu in his *Śrī Bhakti-sandarbhā*. It is stated in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (12.3.52) as follows:

*kṛte yad dhyāyato viṣṇum tretāyāṁ yajato makhaiḥ
dvāpare paricaryāyāṁ kalau tad dhari-kīrtanāt*

“Whatever result was obtained in Satya-yuga by meditating on Viṣṇu, in Tretā-yuga by performing sacrifices, and in Dvāpara-yuga by serving the Lord's lotus feet can be obtained in Kali-yuga simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*.” We are herein citing evidence from the *Śrī Nārāyaṇa-saṁhitā* quoted by Śrīmad Ācārya Ānandatīrtha Pūrṇaprajña Madhva Muni in his commentary on the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* while teaching the *bhāgavata-mārga* to the fallen souls of Kali-yuga:

*dvāparīyair janair viṣṇuḥ pañcarātrais tu kevalaiḥ
kalau tu nāma-mātreṇa pūjyate bhagavān hariḥ*

“The people of Dvāpara-yuga worshiped Hari through the system of *pañcarātriaka*, but in the present age of Kali, rather than following the process of Dvāpara-yuga, one can worship Lord Hari only by chanting His holy names.”

Although Śrīmad Ānandatīrtha did not mention the process of *pañcarātriaka* in his *Brahma-sūtra* commentary, he has not disregarded the glories of the *Pañcarātras* in his other commentary, the *Anuvyākhyāna*, which he wrote for refuting opposing opinions. It is only some less intelligent people who consider Śrī Madhva Muni as averse to the *pañcarātriaka* system.

The *pañcarātrikas* are inclined to the path of *arcana*, and the *bhāgavatas* are inclined to *kīrtana*. In his *Bhakti-sandarbhā* and *Krama-sandarbhā* commentary on *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (7.5.23) Śrī Jīva Prabhu has stated:

ārcana-mārge śraddhā cet, āśrita-mantra-gurus taṁ viśeṣataḥ prcchet. yadyapi śrī bhāgavata-mate pañcarātrādi-vat arcana-mārgasyāvaśyakatvaṁ nāsti, tad vināpi saraṇāpatty-ādīnām ekatareṇāpi puruṣārtha-siddher abhihitatvāt, tathāpi śrī-

nāradādi-vartmānuseradbhiḥ. kṛtāyām dīkṣāyām arcanam avaśyaṁ kriyetaiva. para-dvārā tat-sampādanam vyavahāra-niṣṭhatvasyālastvasya vā pratipādakam. tato 'śraddhā-mayatvād dhīnam eva tat. mantra-dīkṣādy-apekṣā yady api svarūpato nāsti tathāpi prāyaḥ svabhāvato dehādi-sambandhena kadarya-śīlānām vikṣipta-cittānām janānām tat-tat-saṅkocī-karaṇāya śrīmad-ṛṣi-prabhṛtibhir atrārcana-mārga kvacit kvacit kācit kācin maryādā sthāpitāsti. tatra tat-tad-apekṣā nāsti; rāmārcana-candrikāyām—vinaiva dīkṣām viprendra puraścaryām vinaiva hi/ vinaiva nyāsa-vidhinā japa-mātreṇa siddhidā.

“If a Vaiṣṇava *sādhaka* develops faith for the path of *arcana*, which is meant for the followers of the *pañcarātri*ka system, then he should exhaustively inquire about that path from the *pañcarātri*ka guru who gave him mantra. It is said that even without *arcana*, by following any of the nine processes of devotional service, headed by surrender, one can attain perfection. So although according to the opinion of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* there is no need for the *arcana-mārga*, which is the only process for the followers of the *pañcarātri*ka system, if one is initiated by a Vaiṣṇava guru who is following the footsteps of personalities like Śrī Nārada, who is also a *pañcarātri*ka, then he must engage in the *arcana* of Lord Viṣṇu with the mantras that he received from his spiritual master. To employ others in *arcana* on one's behalf simply confirms one's lack of conviction or laziness in one's duties. Therefore engaging others in *arcana* on one's behalf is a sign of faithlessness and is thus unacceptable. Although the *bhāgavata* Vaiṣṇavas do not actually need *pañcarātri*ka-mantra-dīkṣā, *pañcarātri*ka sages like Śrī Nārada have in some places given some importance to *arcana* in order to help regulate the loose character and restless minds of the people. There is no need for the support of *arcana* and so on, as stated in the *Rāmārcana-candrikā*: O best of the *brāhmaṇas*, even without *dīkṣā*, *puraścaryā*, and *nyāsa-vidhi*, simply by chanting the mantras of the Supreme Lord one achieves all perfection.”

And in the *Bhakti-sandarbha*, Śrī Jīva Prabhu says:

tataḥ prema-tāratamyena bhakta-mahattva-tāratamyam mukhyam. yair līngaiḥ sa bhagavataḥ priya uttama-madhyamatādi-vivikto bhavati tāni līngāni. tatraiva arcana-mārga tri-vidhatvam labhyate. pādmottara-khaṇḍoktam mahatvam tu arcana-mārga-parāṇām madhya eva jñeyam.

“Next, we consider that a Vaiṣṇava is known as an *uttama*, *madhyama*, or *kaniṣṭha* primarily according to his advancement in love of God. The symptoms for differentiating the *kaniṣṭha*, *madhyama*, and *uttama* devotees, which reveal whether one is dear, more dear, or most dear to the Lord, are all criterion for establishing the position of devotees. In the *pañcarātri*ka-*arcana-mārga* there are three categories of devotees. The glories of the Vaiṣṇavas mentioned in the *Padma Purāṇa*, *Uttara-khaṇḍa*, refer only to the followers of the *pañcarātri*ka-*arcana-mārga*.

tatra mahattvam—

<i>tāpādi pañca-saṁskārī</i>	<i>navejyā-karma-kāraḥ</i>
<i>artha-pāṇcaka-vid vipro</i>	<i>mahā-bhāgavataḥ smṛtaḥ</i>

“The characteristics of the *uttama* or *mahā-bhāgavata* according to the *arcana-mārga* are as follows: ‘A *brāhmaṇa* who has undergone the five kinds of *saṁskāras*, or purificatory processes, like *tāpa*, who has executed the rituals of worship, and who has understood the *Artha-pāṇcaka*⁴ is called a *mahā-bhāgavata*.’

madhyamatvaṁ—

*tāpaḥ puṇḍraṁ tathā nāma manthro yāgaś ca pañcamah
amī hi pañca-saṁskārāḥ paramaikānti-hetarvaḥ*

“The characteristics of the *madhyama* according to the *pañcarātri-ka-arcana-mārga* are as follows: ‘The five kinds of *saṁskāras* are *tāpa*, *puṇḍra*, *nāma*, *mantra*, and *japa*. According to the *pañcarātri-ka* teachings, one who performs these five activities is called a *madhyama-bhāgavata*.’

tatra kaniṣṭhatvaṁ—

*śaṅkha-cakrādy-ūrdhva-puṇḍra- dhāraṇādy-ātma-lakṣaṇam
tan-namaskaraṇaṁ caiva vaiṣṇavatvaṁ ihocyate*

“The characteristics of the *kaniṣṭha* according to the *pañcarātri-ka-arcana-mārga* are as follows: ‘One who marks his body with the four signs of Viṣṇu—the conchshell, *cakra*, club, and lotus—and who offers obeisances to other Vaiṣṇavas whose bodies are marked with these signs is called a *kaniṣṭha*.’

“Apart from the *pañcarātri-ka* system, we are now presenting the mental symptoms of a *mahā-bhāgavata* according to the *bhāva-mārga*, as stated in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.2.45):

*sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ paśyed bhagavad-bhāvam ātmanaḥ
bhūtāni bhagavaty ātmany eṣa bhāgavatottamaḥ*

“Śrī Havir said: The most advanced devotee, or *mahā-bhāgavata*, sees within everything the soul of all souls, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Consequently he sees everything in relation to the Supreme Lord and understands that everything that exists is eternally situated within the Lord.” The impersonalists, who consider the living entity and the Supreme Lord as one, are opposed to the principle of this *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* verse. To consider the conditioned living entities as equal to the Supreme Lord is extremely contrary to the principles of devotional service and to the real nature of *mahā-bhāgavatas*. The mood of the damsels of Vraja found in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.35.9—*vana-latās tarava ātmani*), (10.21.15—*nadyas tadā tad upadhārya*), and (10.90.15—*kuravi vilapasi*) indicate the mood of a *mahā-bhāgavata*.

“Now the specific mental symptoms of a *madhyama-bhāgavata* are being described in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.2.46) as follows:

*īsvare tad-adhīneṣu bālīṣeṣu dviṣatsu ca
prema-maitrī-kṛpopekṣā yaḥ karoti sa madhyamaḥ*

“An intermediate or second-class devotee, called *madhyama-adhikārī*, offers his love to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is a sincere friend to all the devotees of the Lord, shows mercy to ignorant people who are innocent and disregards those who are envious of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.’

“Next, the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.2.47) describes the symptoms of a *kaniṣṭha* in terms of his body symptoms of executing *bhagavad-dharma* and also somewhat in terms of his mentality in the following words:

*arcāyām eva haraye pūjām yaḥ śraddhayehate
na tad-bhakteṣu cānyeṣu sa bhaktaḥ prākṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ*

“A devotee who faithfully engages in the worship of the Deity in the temple but does not behave properly toward other devotees or people in general is called a *prākṛta-bhakta*, a materialistic devotee, and is considered to be in the lowest position.” The *yasyātma-buddhiḥ* verse is applicable to such persons. Prabhupāda Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī and other Viṣṇupāda ācāryas who are completely dependent on the lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Gaura are all worshipers on the path of *bhāva* in accordance with the philosophy of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. Among the followers of Śrī Gaura, the *bhāva* path is adhered to rather than the *pañcarātriaka-arcana* path, which is followed only to some extent in the Deity worship of the *kaniṣṭha* devotees. Śrī Lakṣmī Purī and Śrī Śrīmad Viṣṇupāda Mādhavendra Purī, who were disciplic descendants of Śrīmad Ācārya Ānandatīrtha Pūrṇaprajña Madhvapāda, were adherents of the pure *bhāgavata* system on the path of *bhāva-mārga*. From Śrī Mādhavendra Purī, *bhāgavata-dharma* on the path of *bhāva* has become completely manifested among the followers of Śrī Caitanya. Although the *bhāgavata-mārga* propounded by Śrī Madhvācārya has also been accepted by the ācāryas in his disciplic succession like Śrī Vyāsa Rāya, Śrī Rāghavendra Yati, and Śrī Vijayadhvaja as well as the ācāryas of the *maṭhas* of Uḍupī like Kṛṣṇapura, Puttugī, Sode, Pejāvara, Aghanāḍu, Kaṇṇura, Palanāḍu and also the temple authorities of Kudāmbara, Cikka, and Manakaṭṭi, these persons were nevertheless followers of the principles of *varṇāśrama* in the *pañcarātriaka-arcana-mārga*. Śrī Jīvapāda has quoted the following verse in reference to the ninefold procedure for worshiping the Deity according to the *pañcarātriaka* system:

<i>arcanaṁ mantra-paṭhanam</i>	<i>yogo yāgo hi vandanam</i>
<i>nāma-saṅkīrtanam sevā</i>	<i>tac-cinhair aṅkanam tathā</i>
<i>tadīyārādhanam cejyā</i>	<i>navadhā bhidyate śubhe</i>

“O most auspicious lady, the nine aspects of Deity worship are offering *pūjā*, chanting mantras, meditation, fire sacrifices, praying, chanting the holy names, serving, marking the body with auspicious signs, and worshiping the Vaiṣṇavas.” Explaining the “five objects” of worship (*artha-pañcaka*), Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī Prabhupāda has said: *upāsyaḥ śrī bhagavān, tat paramaṁ padam, tad-dravyam, tan-mantro, jīvātmā ceti pañca-tattva-jñātrtvam artha-pañca-kavitvam*—“The worshipable Supreme Lord, His supreme abode of Vaikuṇṭha, His assets or *tadīya* the pure devotees, His mantras, and the living entities—to know these five subjects is knowledge of *artha-pañcaka*.”

Kūreṣa, a disciple of Śrī Rāmānuja, had a son named Parāśara Bhaṭṭa. A disciple of Parāśara was Vedāntī, whose disciple was Nambur Varadarāja. The disciple of Nambur Varadarāja was Pillāi Lokācārya, who wrote a book named *Artha-pañcaka*. The five subjects described by him are different from those described by Śrī Jīvapāda. He has described the subject of *jīva-svarūpa* (the essential characteristics of the living entity) as having five divisions—*nitya* (eternal), *mukta* (liberated), *baddha* (conditioned), *kevala* (merged in Brahman), and *mumukṣu* (desiring liberation); the subject of *īśvara-svarūpa* (the essential characteristics of the Supreme Lord) as having five divisions—*para* (His original form as Kṛṣṇa), *vyūha* (His quadruple expansions), *vibhava* (His pastime forms), *antaryāmī* (the Supersoul), and *arcanāvatāra* (the Deity incarnation); the subject of *puruṣārtha-svarūpa* (the essential characteristics of the goal of life) as having five divisions—*dharma* (religiousity), *artha* (economic development), *kāma* (sense gratification), *ātmānubhava* (self-realization), and *bhavad-anubhava* (God-realization); the

subject of *upāya-svarūpa* (the characteristics of the means of attainment) as having five divisions—*karma* (fruitive activities), *jñāna* (cultivation of knowledge), *bhakti* (devotional service), *prapatti* (taking shelter), and *ācāryābhimāna* (assuming the role of a spiritual master); and the subject of *virodhi-svarūpa* (the characteristics of impediments) as having five divisions—*svarūpa-virodhī* (obstacles in self-realization), *paratattva-virodhī* (obstacles in God-realization), *puruṣārtha-virodhī* (obstacles in attaining the goal of life), *upāya-virodhī* (obstacles in the means of attainment), and *prāpya-virodhī* (obstacles in attaining the desired results). In this way, he has described twenty-five different items.

The *pañcarātri*ka Vaiṣṇava principles of medieval South India have to some extent entered within the current practices of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. Descendants of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* became more or less attached to the path of *arcana*, like the followers of the *Pañcarātras*, and spread subordination to Śrīman Mahāprabhu sometimes in its pure form but more often in a perverted form. Like the householder *ācāryas* of the Rāmānuja-sampradāya who are addressed as Svāmīs, Gauḍīya householder *ācāryas* have similarly accepted the title of Gosvāmī. While preaching the pure path of *bhāva* explained in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, Śrīman Mahāprabhu distinguished it from mundane formalities, but in due course of time His teachings have become distorted into a branch of the *pañcarātri*ka system. This, however, is not the purpose of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's pure preaching. Although the followers of Rāmānuja and Madhva have remained distinct from the Śāṅkara-sampradāya, whose followers are known as *pañcopāsakas*, or worshipers of five gods, the Gauḍīya-sampradāya of North India was unable to remain aloof from the *pañcopāsakas'* influence and took to the service of such people, who are averse to Vaiṣṇavas. Actually the arrangement for *arcana* in the path of *bhāva* is not completely in agreement with that found in the *pañcarātri*ka system. The *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs* in the *bhāva-mārga* explained in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* are practically equal to the *mahā-bhāgavatas* of the *pañcarātri*ka-*arcana-mārga*, although there is some difference. When these *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs* advance further, they attain the position of *madhyama-adhikārīs*. And when the *madhyama-adhikārīs* advance further, they attain the position of *mahā-bhāgavatas*, or *paramahamsas*. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has quoted the following eight verses from the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.2.48-55) to explain the position of the *mahā-bhāgavatas*:

grhītvāpīndriyair arthān yo na dveṣṭi na hr̥ṣyati
viṣṇor māyām idaṁ paśyan sa vai bhāgavatottamaḥ

“Unlike the *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī* with a materialistic mentality, who engages his senses in enjoying their objects, the person who sees this variegated world as a creation of the illusory energy of Lord Viṣṇu is neither attracted nor repulsed while engaging his senses with their objects. He is indeed the greatest among devotees.” This definition is in terms of both mental and physical disposition.

dehendriya-prāṇa-mano-dhiyām yo
janmāpyaya-kṣud-bhaya-tarṣa-kṛcchraiḥ

saṁsāra-dharmair avimuhyamānaḥ
smṛtyā harer bhāgavata-pradhānaḥ

“One who simply by remembering the lotus feet of Lord Hari is no longer attached to the five objects of body, senses, life air, mind, and intelligence and who is thus

no longer entangled in the miseries of birth, death, hunger, fear, and thirst is to be considered a *mahā-bhāgavata*, a foremost devotee of the Lord.

*na kāma-karma-bījānām yasya cetasi sambhavaḥ
vāsudevaika-nilayaḥ sa vai bhāgavatottamaḥ*

“The seed of lusty desires cannot fructify in the heart of one who is fixed in the service of the Supreme Lord and completely peaceful because he has taken shelter of the lotus feet of the Lord. Such a person is considered a *pradhāna* Vaiṣṇava, or topmost devotee of the Lord.

*na yasya janma-karmabhyām na varṇāśrama-jātibhiḥ
sajjate 'sminn ahaṁ-bhāvo dehe vai sa hareḥ priyaḥ*

“If one does not become proud of one's material body made of skin and flesh in spite of taking an aristocratic birth such as that of a *brāhmaṇa*, executing pious activities like giving and accepting charity, and having a prestigious position within *varṇāśrama* society, then one is to be considered the dearmost servitor of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

*na yasya svaḥ para iti vittaṣv ātmani vā bhidā
sarva-bhūta-samaḥ śāntaḥ sa vai bhāgavatottamaḥ*

“One who sees no distinction of ‘own’ and ‘others’ in terms of his body and wealth, who treats all living beings equally, and who is always peaceful is considered to be a *mahā-bhāgavata*.

*tri-bhuvana-vibhava-hetave 'py akunṭha-
smṛtir ajitātma-surādibhir vimṛgyāt*

*na calati bhagavat-padāravindāl
lava-nimiṣārdham api yaḥ sa vaiṣṇavāgryaḥ*

“One whose mind cannot be distracted from the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa for even a single moment even if he achieves the benediction of ruling and enjoying the opulence of the entire universe, which the demigods whose hearts are dedicated to Lord Ajita aspire for, is to be considered *vaiṣṇava-pradhāna*, the best of the Vaiṣṇavas.

*bhagavata uru-vikramāṅghri-śākhā-
nakha-maṇi-candrikayā nirasta-tāpe*

*hṛdi katham upasīdatām punaḥ sa
prabhavati candra ivodite 'rka-tāpaḥ*

“A person who is afflicted by the burning heat of the sun experiences no pain from the cooling moonshine. So how can the fire of material suffering again burn one's heart when it has been cooled by the rays emanating from the jewel-like nails of the most powerful lotus feet of the Supreme Lord? Such a person is a *mahā-bhāgavata*.

*visṛjati hṛdayaṁ na yasya sākṣād
dharir avaśābhihito 'py aghaughā-nāsaḥ*

praṇaya-rasanayā dhṛtāṅghri-padmaḥ

sa bhavati bhāgavata-pradhāna uktaḥ

“If one even unintentionally utters the names of Lord Hari, all his sinful reactions are destroyed. That Supreme Lord Hari never leaves the heart of one who has captured His lotus feet with love. Such a person is to be known as *mahā-bhāgavata*, the most exalted devotee of the Lord.”

The classification of Vaiṣṇavas established in the *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa*, *Kṛṣṇa-janma-khaṇḍa*, Chapter 84, cannot be accepted as the same as the *pañcarātri* system of classification.

The *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa* presents the characteristics of topmost devotees as follows:

<i>trṇa-śayyā-rato bhakto mano niveśayet tyaktvā</i>	<i>man-nāma-guṇa-kīrtiṣu saṁsāra-sukha-kāraṇam</i>
<i>dhyāyate mat-padābjaṁ ca sarva-siddhaṁ na vāñcanti</i>	<i>pūjayed bhakti-bhāvataḥ te 'nimādikam īpsitam</i>
<i>brahmatvaṁ amaratvaṁ vā dāsyam vinā na hīcchanti</i>	<i>suratvaṁ sukha-kāraṇam sālokyādi-catuṣṭayam</i>
<i>naiva nirvāṇa-muktim ca vāñcati niṣcalāṁ bhaktim</i>	<i>sudhā-pānam abhīpsitam madīyām atulām api</i>
<i>strī-puṁ-vibhedo nāsty evaṁ kṣut-pipāsādikam nidrām</i>	<i>sarva-jīveṣv abhinnatā lobha-mohādikam ripuṁ</i>
<i>tyaktvā divā-niṣaṁ mām ca</i>	<i>dhyāyate ca dig-ambaraḥ</i>

“My devotees give up the sources of material pleasure, sleep on straw mats, engage their minds in glorifying My names and qualities, and devotedly worship My lotus feet within their hearts. They do not desire to achieve any mystic perfections like *aṇimā*. They do not desire happiness derived from becoming a demigod, an immortal, or Lord Brahmā. If they cannot be situated in My service, they do not even want perfections like living on the same planet with Me. They do not desire to drink nectar, nor do they desire the liberation of *nirvāṇa*. My devotees pray only for uncomparable and undeviating devotional service at My lotus feet. They do not discriminate between men and women, and they treat all living entities equally. Becoming free from the enemies headed by hunger, thirst, sleep, greed, and illusion, they go without clothing and meditate day and night on Me. These are the symptoms of *uttama* Vaiṣṇavas.”

Characteristics of the intermediate Vaiṣṇava:

<i>nāaktaḥ karmasu gr̥hī karoti satatam caiva</i>	<i>pūrva-prāktanataḥ śuciḥ pūrva-karma-nikṛntanam</i>
<i>na karoty aparaṁ yatnāt sarvaṁ kṛṣṇasya yat kiñcin</i>	<i>saṅkalpa-rahitaś ca saḥ nāhaṁ kartā ca karmaṇaḥ</i>
<i>karmaṇā manasā vācā</i>	<i>satatam cintayed iti</i>

“The *madhyama-adhikārī* is already purified as the result of the pious deeds of his

previous life, and although he lives at home he remains unattached. Everything he does simply helps diminish the reactions of his past activities. He is devoid of material desires and is careful to avoid accumulating further karmic reactions. The conviction that 'Everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa; I am not the doer,' is apparent in his thoughts, speech, and actions."

Characteristics of the neophyte Vaiṣṇava:

*nyūna-bhaktaś ca tan-nyunaḥ sa ca prākṛtikaḥ śrutau
yamaṁ vā yama-dūtaṁ vā svapne sa ca na paśyati*

*puruṣāṇām sahasraṁ ca pūrva-bhaktaḥ samuddharet
puṁsām śataṁ madhyamaṁ ca tac caturthaṁ ca prākṛtaḥ*

"The *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī* is inferior to the *madhyama-adhikārī*. He has material misconceptions even about hearing topics of Hari, yet he also does not see Yamarāja or his servants even in his dreams. The *uttama-adhikārī* is capable of delivering one thousand generations of his ancestors, the *madhyama-adhikārī* is capable of delivering one hundred generations, and the *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī* is capable of delivering only four generations."

Although a shadow of indirect devotional service is found among some *pañcarātri*ka Vaiṣṇavas, they will also come to the stage of *uttama-adhikārī* by their gradual advancement. In the opinion of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, only devotional service that is pure, unalloyed, and devoid of material desires is acceptable. It is a fact that the followers of the *Pañcarātras* also use the word *aikāntika*, or unalloyed, to describe their devotional service, but because they have accepted the support of karma and *jñāna* in their process of worship, such a process cannot be compared with the pure devotional service preached by Śrī Caitanyacandra.

In his commentary on Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī's *Tattva-sandarbhā*, Śrīmad Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana Prabhu, who is known as the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Vedāntācārya, has pointed out four differences with the South Indian Vaiṣṇava followers of Madhvācārya in these words:

bhaktānām vipraṇām eva mokṣaḥ, devāḥ bhakteṣu mukhyāḥ, viriñcasyaiva sāyujyam, lakṣmīyā jīva-koṭitvam ity evaṁ mata-viśeṣaḥ dakṣiṇādi-deśeti tena gaude 'pi mādhavendrādayas tad upaśiṣyāḥ katicid babhūvur ity arthaḥ.

Śrī Vidyābhūṣana Prabhu has found the following four teachings in the philosophy of Madhvācārya to be unacceptable to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas: Only a *brāhmaṇa* devotee is eligible for liberation, the demigods are the foremost devotees, Lord Brahmā attains *sāyujya-mukti* (merging in Brahman), and Lakṣmīdevī is included among the *jīvas*. Nevertheless Śrī Mādhavendra Purī and a number of others in Bengal became followers of Madhvācārya's *prema-bhakti* line.

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has mentioned the names of Śrī Vijayadhvaṇya and Vyāsa Tīrtha, who were among the South Indian disciples of Śrī Madhvācārya in the Tattvavāda school. He said that the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas from Śrīpāda Jayatīrtha to Śrī Mādhavendra Purīpāda were all in the line of *prema-bhakti*. Vidyādhiraṇya, the disciple of Śrīpāda Jayatīrtha, Rājendra Tīrtha, the disciple of Vidyādhiraṇya, and his disciple, Vijayadhvaṇya, all appeared in the middle of the fifteenth century.

Puruṣottama, the disciple of Vijayadhvaṇya, had a disciple named Subrahmaṇya, whose disciple was Vyāsa Tīrtha. Vyāsa Tīrtha lived from 1548 to 1598 A.D., so he was a contemporary of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī.

This Tattvavāda, or *pañcarātri*ka system, is not acceptable in the opinion of Śrīman

Mahāprabhu. Rather, He taught the path of *bhāgavata-mārga*. When Śrī Gaurasundara, the Lord of Goloka worshipable throughout the fourteen worlds, visited the principal *maṭha* in the village of Uḍupī in the district of Mangalore in the year 1511, Śrī Raghuvarya Tīrtha was the *maṭha* commander. There is a description of Lord Caitanya's visit in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā*, Chapter 9) as follows:

*tattvavādī ācārya—saba śāstrete pravīṇa
tāṇre praśna kaila prabhu hañā yena dīna*

“The chief *ācārya* of the Tattvavāda community was very learned in the revealed scriptures. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu humbly questioned him.

*sādhya-sādhana āmi nā jāni bhāla-mate
sādhya-sādhana-śreṣṭha jānāha āmāte*

“Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, ‘I do not know very well the aim of life and how to achieve it. Please tell Me of the best ideal for humanity and how to attain it.’

*ācārya kahe,—‘varṇāśrama-dharma, kṛṣṇe samarpaṇa’
ei haya kṛṣṇa-bhaktera śreṣṭha ‘sādhana’*

“The *ācārya* replied, ‘When the activities of the four castes and the four *āśramas* are dedicated to Kṛṣṇa, they constitute the best means whereby one can attain the highest goal of life.

*‘pañca-vidha mukti’ pāñā vaikunṭhe gamana
‘sādhya-śreṣṭha’ haya,—ei śāstra-nirūpaṇa*

“When one dedicates the duties of *varṇāśrama-dharma* to Kṛṣṇa, he is eligible for five kinds of liberation. Thus he is transferred to the spiritual world in Vaikunṭha. This is the highest goal of life and the verdict of all revealed scriptures.’

*prabhu kahe,—śāstre kahe śravaṇa-kīrtana
kṛṣṇa-prema-sevā-phalera ‘parama-sādhana’*

“Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, ‘According to the verdict of the *śāstras*, the process of hearing and chanting is the best means to attain loving service to Kṛṣṇa.

*śravaṇa-kīrtana ha-ite kṛṣṇe haya ‘premā’
sei pañcama puruṣārtha—puruṣārthera sīmā*

“When one comes to the platform of loving service to Lord Kṛṣṇa by executing these nine processes beginning with hearing and chanting, he has attained the fifth platform of success and the limit of life's goals.

*karma-nindā, karma-tyāga, sarva-śāstre kahe
karma haite prema-bhakti kṛṣṇe kabhu nahe*

“In every revealed scripture there is condemnation of fruitive activities. It is advised everywhere to give up engagement in fruitive activities, for by executing them no one can attain the highest goal of life, love of Godhead.

*pañca-vidha mukti tyāga kare bhakta-gaṇa
phalgu kari’ ‘mukti’ dekhe narakera sama*

“Pure devotees reject the five kinds of liberation; indeed, for them liberation is very insignificant because they see it as hellish.

*mukti, karma—dui vastu tyaje bhakta-gaṇa
sei dui sthāpa' tumi `sādhya', `sādhana'*

“Both liberation and fruitive activity are rejected by devotees. You are trying to establish these things as life's goal and the process for attaining it.”

*prabhu kahe,—karmī, jñānī,—dui bhakti-hīna
tomāra sampradāye dekhi sei dui cihna*

“Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, ‘Both the fruitive worker and the speculative philosopher are considered nondevotees. We see both elements present in your *sampradāya*.’”

It is further stated in the *Antya-līlā*, Chapter Five:

*āra eka `svabhāva' gaurera śuna, bhakta-gaṇa
aiśvarya-svabhāva gūḍha kare prakāṭana*

“There is yet another characteristic of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. O devotees, listen carefully to how He manifests His opulence and characteristics, although they are exceptionally deep.

*sannyāsī paṇḍita-gaṇera karite garva nāśa
nīca-śūdra-dvārā karena dharmera prakāśa*

“To vanquish the false pride of so-called renunciants and learned scholars, He spreads real religious principles, even through a *śūdra*, or lowborn fourth-class man.

*`bhakti', `prema', `tattva' kahe rāye kari' `vaktā'
āpani pradyumna-miśra-saha haya `śrotā'*

“Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu preached about devotional service, ecstatic love and the Absolute Truth by making Rāmānanda Rāya, a *grhastha* born in a low family, the speaker. Then Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself, the exalted *brāhmaṇa-sannyāsī*, and Pradyumna Miśra, the purified *brāhmaṇa*, both became the hearers of Rāmānanda Rāya.

*haridāsa-dvārā nāma-māhātmya-prakāśa
sanātana-dvārā bhakti-siddhānta-vilāsa*

“Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu exhibited the glories of the holy name of the Lord through Haridāsa Ṭhākura, who was born in a Mohammedan family. Similarly, He exhibited the essence of devotional service through Sanātana Gosvāmī, who had almost been converted into a Mohammedan.

*śrī-rūpa-dvārā vrajera prema-rasa-līlā
ke bujhite pāre gambhīra caitanyera khelā?*

“The Lord also fully exhibited the ecstatic love and transcendental pastimes of Vṛndāvana through Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. Considering all this, who can understand the deep plans of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu?”

It is not only the *sampradāya ācāryas* who mistakenly compare the principles of *karma-kāṇḍa* like following *varṇāśrama* with devotional service like hearing and chanting, there are also nondevotee *sampradāyas* opposed to the principles of devotional service who consider their misconceptions and various devices that bind them to material existence as Vaiṣṇava practices. Though such persons claim

to be Vaiṣṇavas according to their own definition, Vaiṣṇavas who are liberated from material designations know that they are attached to material designations. In his *Bhakti-sandarbha*, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī Prabhupāda has quoted various sources to describe a few categories of such Vaiṣṇavas as follows:

skānde—

*dharmārthaṁ jīvitam yeṣāṁ santānārthaṁ ca maithunam
pacanaṁ vipra-mukhyārthaṁ jñeyās te vaiṣṇavā narāḥ*

viṣṇu purāṇe—

*na calati nija-varṇa-dharmato yaḥ
sama-matir ātma-suhṛt-vipakṣa-pakṣe*

*na harati na ca hanti kiñcid uccaiḥ
sthita-manasaṁ tam avehi viṣṇu-bhaktam*

pādme—

*jīvitam yasya dharmārthe dharmo hary-artha eva ca
aho-rātrāṇi puṇyārthaṁ tam manye vaiṣṇavaṁ janam*

br̥han-nārādīye—

*śive ca parameśāne viṣṇau ca paramātmāni
sama-buddhyā pravartante te vai bhāgavatottamāḥ*

“In the *Skanda Purāṇa* it is said: ‘According to the fruitive workers, Vaiṣṇavas are those whose lives are dedicated to following religious principles, whose sex life is meant for begetting children, and whose cooking is for satisfying the best of the *brāhmaṇas*.’

“In the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* it is said: ‘A Vaiṣṇava is one who considers his actions are in accordance with the order of Lord Viṣṇu. He who does not deviate from the principles of his *varṇa* and *āśrama*, who treats his friends and enemies equally, and who neither destroys nor steals anything—such a sober person is a devotee of Viṣṇu.’

“Becoming a Vaiṣṇava by offering the fruits of one's karma to the Lord is explained in the *Padma Purāṇa* as follows: ‘One whose life is dedicated to following religious principles, whose religious principles are dedicated for the pleasure of the Supreme Lord, and whose days and nights are passed in accumulating pious activities is known as a Vaiṣṇava.’

“The symptoms of a *uttama-adhikārī* according to the Śāivites are given in the *Br̥han-nārādīya Purāṇa* as follows: ‘Those who accept Lord Śiva, the chief of the demigods, as equal to Lord Viṣṇu, the Supersoul, are considered *mahā-bhāgavatas*.’”

Other similar statements are found in scriptures that are meant for pseudo-devotees and devotees who do not know how to practically apply the principles of devotional service. Actually, apart from unalloyed devotional service, all other activities of this material world fall under the categories of either impure devotional service or fruitive work with desires for the results. All such activities are subject to change, temporary, and contemptible. The imagined qualities of Vaiṣṇavas and devotional service that the *karmīs*, *jñānīs*, and sense enjoyers claim

to be supreme according to their respective tastes are unscientific, imprudent, and mere products of ignorance that are situated far away from pure devotional service. In this connection, one naturally thinks about the statements made by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the purifier of the entire world, Śrī Mahāprabhu, regarding the identity of Śrī Viṣṇupāda Prabhuvāra Śrīmad Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, who was the treasure of Mahāprabhu's heart and a mountain of transcendental opulences. These statements are found in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Antya-līlā*, Chapter Six, as follows:

*tomāra bāpa-jyēthā—viṣaya-viṣṭhā-gartera kīḍā
sukha kari' māne viṣaya-viṣera mahā-pīḍā*

*yadyadi brahmaṇya kare, brāhmaṇera sahāya
'suddha-vaiṣṇava' nahe, haye 'vaiṣṇavera prāya'*

*tathāpi viṣayera svabhāva—kare mahā-andha
sei karma karāya, yāte haya bhava-bandha*

“My dear Raghunātha dāsa, your father and his elder brother are just like worms in stool in the ditch of material enjoyment, for the great disease of the poison of material enjoyment is what they consider happiness. Although your father and uncle are charitable to *brāhmaṇas* and greatly help them, they are nevertheless not pure Vaiṣṇavas. However, they are almost like Vaiṣṇavas. Those who are attached to materialistic life and are blind to spiritual life must act in such a way that they are bound to repeated birth and death by the actions and reactions of their activities.”

In the process of ascertaining who is a Vaiṣṇava, many people misidentify one who is almost a Vaiṣṇava as a real Vaiṣṇava. Materialists and *karmīs* are not included among the pure Vaiṣṇavas. Seeing their mundane endeavors, great personalities who are conversant in devotional scriptures call them *vaiṣṇava-prāya*, almost Vaiṣṇavas. They never make the mistake of regarding them as real Vaiṣṇavas. Since we will discuss the behavior and dealings of Vaiṣṇavas in a separate chapter, we will not elaborate on this point at present.

By discussing the different grades of Vaiṣṇavas, we have now been able to understand the different degrees of Vaiṣṇavism. When one gives up the materialist mentality of being covered by the conceptions of whimsical sense enjoyment, karma, and *jñāna* and favorably cultivates attraction to Kṛṣṇa, this is called pure devotional service. One whose heart is naturally fixed in this principle is a pure devotee. The glories of such pure devotees have already been quoted from the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. The conclusion that is given by Śrī Mahāprabhu's dearest servant, Śrī Śrī Viṣṇupāda Śrīmad Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, whose heart is nondifferent from that of Śrī Mahāprabhu, in his essay, *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*, must be followed by all pure Vaiṣṇavas.

*kṛṣṇeti yasya giri taṁ manasādriyeta
dikṣāsti cet prañatibhiḥ ca bhajantam īśam*

*śuśrūṣayā bhajana-vijñam ananyam anya-
nindādi-śūnya-hṛdam īpsita-saṅga-labdhyā*

“One should mentally honor the devotee who chants the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa,

one should offer humble obeisances to the devotee who has undergone spiritual initiation [*dīkṣā*] and is engaged in worshiping the Deity, and one should associate with and faithfully serve that pure devotee who is advanced in undeviated devotional service and whose heart is completely devoid of the propensity to criticize others.”

Citing the authority of the *Pañcarātra-āgamas* in his *Bhakti-sandarbhā*, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī Prabhu has stated:

divyaṁ jñānaṁ yato dadyāt kuryāt pāpasya saṅkṣayam
tasmād dīkṣeti sā proktā deśikais tattva-kovidaiḥ

“*Dīkṣā* is the process by which transcendental knowledge is awakened and all reactions caused by sinful activity are vanquished. Learned persons who are expert in the study of the revealed scriptures declare this process to be called *dīkṣā*.”

A spiritual master who gives mantra, assists one in spiritual realization rather than increasing one's material knowledge, and is able to destroy all illicit endeavors for sinful activities is a real initiating spiritual master, and those who take shelter of him are his initiated disciples. The instructions given to Māyādevī by Nāmācārya Śrīla Ṭhākura Haridāsa Prabhu, the king of devotees, regarding spiritual initiation are described in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Antya 3.240-241) as follows:

saṅkhyā-nāma-saṅkīrtana—ei 'mahā-yajña' manye
tāhāte dīkṣita āmi ha-i prati-dine

yāvat kīrtana samāpta nahe, nā kari anya kāma
kīrtana samāpta haile, haya dīkṣāra viśrāma

“I have been initiated into a vow to perform a great sacrifice by chanting the holy name a certain number of times every day. As long as the vow to chant is unfulfilled, I do not desire anything else. When I finish my chanting, then I have an opportunity to do anything.”

Unless one becomes qualified as a sacrificial *brāhmaṇa* in the sacrifice of chanting the holy names, the name of Kṛṣṇa does not manifest. Although Ṭhākura Haridāsa Prabhu was not a seminal or Vedic *brāhmaṇa*, he attained the position of a qualified initiated *brāhmaṇa*:

koṭi-nāma-grahaṇa-yajña kari eka-māse
ei dīkṣā kariyāchi, haila āsi' śeṣe

“I have vowed to chant ten million names in a month. I have taken this vow, but now it is nearing its end.”

A *madhyama-adhikārī* should mentally show respect to the *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī* who is properly initiated and engaged in chanting the holy names of Kṛṣṇa. One who has surpassed the stage of *kaniṣṭha-adhikāra* through the process of chanting the holy names and who engages in worshiping the Supreme Lord with transcendental realization, such a *madhyama-adhikārī* should be offered respectful obeisances and his guidance should be followed. And one who is constantly engaged in worshiping Kṛṣṇa with transcendental realization, who has completely given up aversion to Hari, and who does not condemn even those who are envious of Hari—such a *mahā-bhāgavata* should be respectfully served with the conviction that his association is most desirable.

A Vaiṣṇava whose life has become successful by taking initiation has no false ego.

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī Prabhu quotes the following verses from the *Padma Purāṇa* in this connection:

ahaṅkṛtir ma-kāraḥ syān na-kāras tan niṣedhakaḥ
tasmāt tu namasā kṣetri- svātantryaṁ pratiṣidhyate

bhagavat-paratanthro 'sau tadāyatātma-jīvanaḥ
tasmāt sva-sāmarthya-vidhim tyajet sarvam aśeṣataḥ

īśvarasya tu sāmartyāṭ nālabhyaṁ tasya vidyate
tasmin nyasta-bharaḥ śete tat-karmaiva samācaret

“The holy names of the Lord are directly the Supreme Personality of Godhead. When the word *namaḥ* is added to the names of the Lord it indicates subordination to the Lord, and the combination is called a mantra. The syllable *ma* refers to the material ego, and the syllable *na* indicates its negation. Therefore the word *namaḥ* is used to indicate one's rejection of the false ego under the subordination of the Lord. The living entity who possesses the “field” of the material body and is thus “the proprietor of the field” is called the *jīva*. When the living entity uses the word *namaḥ*, his independence in the form of absorption in matter is counteracted.

“A Vaiṣṇava devotee of the Lord is completely subordinate to the Lord, meaning that his life is fully dedicated to the Lord. Therefore a Vaiṣṇava must completely give up his independent endeavors and concocted formalities.

“By the unlimited potency of the Lord, there is nothing unachievable for His devotees. Devotees should be fully dependent on the Lord and properly engaged in His service.”

The *śāstras* that enjoin one should take initiation from a qualified transcendentalist who has perfected his life by chanting mantras. There is no possibility of receiving transcendental knowledge from an unqualified person who is bound by the false ego of high birth and greed for money. Therefore those who desire their own welfare should give up the materialistic, proud, so-called guru and take proper initiation from a Vaiṣṇava guru. If one has a prominent false ego and a material conception of life, then he will naturally become envious of the transcendental Vaiṣṇavas. One should give up the so-called guru who is envious of the Vaiṣṇavas, knowing him to be a nondevotee. If one fails to do so, one will incur sin and deviate from the path of devotion. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī Prabhu has instructed the devotees of the Lord how to nourish their practice of devotional service in the following way:

vaiṣṇava-vidveṣī cet parityājya eva, “guror apy avaliptasye”ti smaraṇāt. tasya vaiṣṇava-bhāva-rāhityenāvaiṣṇavatayā “avaiṣṇavopadiṣṭena” iti vacana-viśayatvāc ca. yathokta-lakṣaṇasya śrī-guror avidyamānatāyām tu tasyaiva mahā-bhāgavatasyaikasya nitya-sevanam paramam śreyah.

“If a so-called guru is envious of the Vaiṣṇavas, then one should reject him, remembering the *guror apy avaliptasya* verse⁵. This so-called guru does not have the qualities of a Vaiṣṇava, therefore such a nondevotee should not be accepted as a guru. Those devotees who desire eternal welfare should say farewell to such so-called gurus, knowing them to be the subjects of the *avaiṣṇavopadiṣṭena* verse⁶. In the absence of a genuine Vaiṣṇava guru who fits the description given above, one should constantly serve a *mahā-bhāgavata* for one's ultimate welfare.” Those who blaspheme Vaiṣṇavas can never become devoted to Lord Hari. Due to their sinful activities, those who are not devotees of Kṛṣṇa cannot become Viṣṇu-

janas. The Vaiṣṇavas should always associate with their own compatriots and should pass their time hearing and chanting topics of the Lord and His devotees. Otherwise, as a result of bad association, they will forget their constitutional position as Hari-janas and become greatly proud of being rich, learned, brahminical, and so on.

In His instructions to Śrī Sanātana, Śrīman Mahāprabhu has personally mentioned two main reasons why a Vaiṣṇava may lose his standing as a Vaiṣṇava. If a practitioner indulges in either of them, he can no longer remain a Hari-jana. When one ceases to perform fruitive activities, mundane pride leaves him aside. Just as a *brāhmaṇa* who does not behave properly and lacks the appropriate brahminical qualities becomes a *śūdra* or outcaste, so a Hari-jana whose devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa becomes interrupted and who comes under the influence of women due to material absorption falls from the position of a Vaiṣṇava and then considers that following the *varṇāśrama* principles is of utmost importance.

In the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā*, Chapter Twenty-two, it is stated:

asat-saṅga-tyāga,—ei vaiṣṇava-ācāra
‘strī-saṅgī’—eka asādhū, ‘kṛṣṇābhakta’ āra

eta saba chāḍi’ āra varṇāśrama-dharma
akiñcana hañā laya kṛṣṇaika-śaraṇa

vidhi-dharma chāḍi’ bhaje kṛṣṇera caraṇa
niṣiddha pāpācāre tāra kabhu nahe mana

ajñāne vā haya yadi ‘pāpa’ upasthita
kṛṣṇa tāñre śuddha kare, nā karāya prāyaścitta

jñāna-vairāgyādi—bhaktira kabhu nahe ‘aṅga’
ahimsā-yama-niyamādi bule kṛṣṇa-bhakta-saṅga

“A Vaiṣṇava should always avoid the association of ordinary people. Common people are very much materially attached, especially to women. Vaiṣṇavas should also avoid the company of those who are not devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

“Without hesitation, one should take the exclusive shelter of Lord Kṛṣṇa with full confidence, giving up bad association and even neglecting the regulative principles of the four *varṇas* and four *āśramas*. That is to say, one should abandon all material attachment.

“Although the pure devotee does not follow all the regulative principles of *varṇāśrama*, he worships the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore he naturally has no tendency to commit sin.

“If, however, a devotee accidentally becomes involved in a sinful activity, Kṛṣṇa purifies him. He does not have to undergo the regulative form of atonement.

“The path of speculative knowledge and renunciation is not very essential for devotional service. Indeed, good qualities such as nonviolence and mind and sense control automatically accompany a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa.”

The first obstacle for being able to identify oneself as a Vaiṣṇava is *strī-saṅga*, association with women. Association with women is of two types, the first of which is regulated association based on *varṇāśrama* principles. In the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā*, Chapter One, it is said:

*kṛṣṇa-bhaktira bādhaka—yata śubhāśubha karma
seha eka jīvera ajñāna-tamo-dharma*

“All kinds of activities, both auspicious and inauspicious, that are detrimental to the discharge of transcendental loving service to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa are actions of the darkness of ignorance.”

Śrīla Ṭhākura Narottama has also said:

*punya se sukhera dhāma, tāhāra nā laio nāma
pāpa punya dui parihara*

“Don't even talk about pious activities, which are the source of all happiness. Give up both pious and sinful activities.”

Giving up the association of Hari-janas and becoming overly attached to the wife under one's protection is the symptom of bad association. But remaining in the *gṛhastha āśrama* in order to increase Kṛṣṇa's family cannot be called *strī-saṅga*. The second kind of *strī-saṅga* is unregulated association with women, which is irreligious and which creates disturbances in the *varṇāśrama* society, because those who indulge in such association are engaged in sinful activities, abominable activities, or inactivity, and as a result they go to hell. The sinful people of the material world are completely unqualified to be called Vaiṣṇavas. And pious people who strictly follow the rules and regulations of *varṇāśrama* but are indifferent to the service of Hari are also completely unqualified to be called Hari-janas.

If the lowest classes of Prakṛti-janas are addressed as Hari-janas, then those who address them as such are ineligible to have the fortune of being called Hari-janas. If *varṇāśrama* and other fruitive activities enjoined in the *śāstras* become prominent in one's life, then one cannot become *akiñcana*, or fully dependent on the Lord; rather these activities provoke offenses against the chanting of the holy names in the form of conceptions of “I” and “mine.” If a person who is fully surrendered to Kṛṣṇa becomes proud of following *varṇāśrama* principles, then it must be considered that he has become most unfortunate. Due to the influence of association with women, the whole material world is daily advancing in aversion to Hari. No one is able to understand the position of the Vaiṣṇavas.

Moreover, even if one gets freedom from material existence by giving up the regulated and unregulated association of women, he is still not completely delivered. He may still be bound by the nondevotional behavior of *dharma*, *artha*, and *kāma*, which are simply three other forms of *strī-saṅga*. *Mokṣa*, though not a form of *strī-saṅga*, is nevertheless a relative accomplishment, being simply the absence of material conceptions. Therefore the constant favorable cultivation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness has been established as the principle item amongst the Vaiṣṇava codes of behavior for removing the illusions of the nondevotees. Those who desire liberation are also nondevotees. Such persons reject *varṇāśrama* principles, engage in self-worship, and falsely claim to be *paramahamsas*; therefore they cannot be Vaiṣṇavas. If one realizes the transcendental position of the Hari-janas and serves them, then he can also become a Hari-jana. If one wants to ascertain the process for achieving devotional service through material knowledge, his endeavor will simply be another form of karma. If one wants to ascertain the process for achieving devotional service through impersonal speculation, his endeavor will be dominated by the process of *jñāna*. And if one simply wants to

immediately enjoy sense gratification without considering its good and bad effects, his endeavor will simply be another form of sense gratification. There is no possibility for these three types of persons to achieve devotional service, which is the eternal spiritual propensity of the Hari-janas. The term “nondevotees” refers to these three types of persons; Jarāsandha, Kāṁsa, Śiṣupāla, and others are also among the nondevotee aspirants of liberation averse to Kṛṣṇa.

The enlightenment of the path of *jñāna* is considered most powerful by the *karmīs* who are attached to religiousity, economic development, and sense gratification. But since it is an obstacle to the cooling moonshine of devotional service, it is not regarded highly by the unalloyed devotees who have already achieved knowledge and supreme auspiciousness. When the nondevotees who are averse to devotional service see the prohibited sinful activities of the pseudo-devotees, they become eager to treat them with their own medicine. But real devotees, or Hari-janas, are not affected by such diseases. If a nonduplicious aspiring Hari-jana is in any way infected by the influence of either of these three categories, then Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself protects him.

The *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.20.27-30) states as follows:

<i>jāta-śraddho mat-kathāsu</i>	<i>nirvinṇaḥ sarva-karmasu</i>
<i>veda duḥkhātmakān kāmān</i>	<i>parityāge 'py anīśvaraḥ</i>
<i>tato bhajeta mām prītaḥ</i>	<i>śraddhālur dṛḍha-niścayaḥ</i>
<i>juṣamānaś ca tām kāmān</i>	<i>duḥkhodarkāmś ca garhayan</i>
<i>proktena bhakti-yogena</i>	<i>bhajato māsakṛn muneh</i>
<i>kāmā hṛdayā naśyanti</i>	<i>sarve mayi hṛdi sthite</i>
<i>bhidyate hṛdaya-granthiś</i>	<i>chidyante sarva-saṁśayāḥ</i>
<i>kṣīyante cāsya karmāṇi</i>	<i>mayi dṛṣṭe 'khilātmani</i>

[The Supreme Lord said:] “One who develops faith in My names, qualities, and pastimes, who has given up attachment for worldly and Vedic activities and their fruits, who has understood material sense gratification as the source of misery yet is unable to give it up—such a faithful devotee has firm conviction that all his necessities will be attained simply by the execution of devotional service, so he goes on enjoying the sense gratification that he knows will lead to misery, while condemning this sense enjoyment and worshiping Me with pure love. In this way an introspective person constantly engages in My devotional service as I have described it, and I take residence in his heart and personally vanquish the contamination of lust. If one installs Me in his heart, faults can no longer remain there; the knots in his heart are untied, his doubts are removed, and his desires for fruitive activities are eradicated.”

The conditioned souls who are attached to and maddened by material sense enjoyment proudly consider themselves the doers and thus become bound in the manifold network of karma. When such people come to understand that the results of their karma are insignificant, then only do they begin to give up their attempt to lord it over material nature and develop faith in the topics of the Supreme Lord. When one develops faith in the topics of Lord Hari, he can give up self-identification as the doer and his desire to lord it over. He then understands that all forms of material sense gratification are simply impediments on the path

towards his goal of life. Yet even after understanding this, he is unable to give up his long-standing inclination for sense gratification due to bad habits and weak faith.

If one who is situated in such an unfortunate state desires to increase his faith in the topics of Hari and serve Him with strong attachment, then the firm conviction that 'If I consider myself the doer, I will simply meet with miseries in this world' will to a great extent protect one from material attachment.

When one takes shelter at the lotus feet of a spiritual master and engages in the exclusive service of the Lord, following in the footsteps of the *mahājanas*, then the transcendental Absolute Truth will capture his heart and all desires other than to serve Kṛṣṇa will be vanquished. At that time the contamination produced from lust that has accumulated from many lifetimes, will be evacuated. He then no longer has any doubt; in other words, he understands that the path of devotional service is sublime. At that time he also understands the uselessness of considering himself the doer. When his self-identification as the doer with the aim of sense gratification becomes diminished, at that time he displays symptoms of full surrender such as all his activities are dedicated to satisfying the Supreme Lord, all his endeavors are directed towards pleasing Kṛṣṇa, and he considers "Kṛṣṇa is my only protector."

Cherished by the *paramahāṁsas*, the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.2.33) states:

*tathā na te mādharma tāvakāḥ kvacid
bhraśyanti mārṅāt tvayi baddha-sauhrdāḥ*

*tvayābhiguptā vicaranti nirbhayā
vināyakānīkapa-mūrdhasu prabho*

"Lord Brahmā said: O Mādhava, Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord of the goddess of fortune, Hari-janas completely in love with You do not fall like the seekers of other goals—the *karmīs* and the relatively superior *jñānīs*—fall from their respective unsteady paths. O my Lord, the Hari-janas are always protected by You and thus fearlessly traverse over the head of the commander-in-chief of those who create obstacles."

The devotees of the Lord do not remain in a dangerous situation; rather, they continue to serve Hari with transcendental realization. But if they happen to lack transcendental realization, the Lord gives them knowledge so that they can understand themselves as Hari-janas. Needless to say, unregulated sense enjoyers, *karmīs*, and *jñānīs* are all desirous of physical and non-physical enjoyment, so there is no possibility of their achieving auspiciousness. But if they give up their respective material desires, they can become devoted Hari-janas.

In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (5.18.12) it is stated:

*yasyāsti bhaktir bhagavaty akiñcanā
sarvair guṇais tatra samāsate surāḥ*

*harāv abhaktasya kuto mahad-guṇā
manorathenāsati dhāvato bahiḥ*

There is no need for a devotee to separately endeavor for acquiring artificial saintly qualities, like those with concepts other than devotional service who are haunted by the ghosts of karma and *jñāna*. If one is on the platform of devotional service,

then all saintly qualities automatically manifest in him. Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja said, “Those who have unmotivated devotion for the Personality of Godhead always possess all good qualities. They are perfectly established in these good qualities. Such exalted qualities, however, can never remain in anyone who is not a Hari-jana. Because the unregulated sense enjoyers, *karmīs*, and *jñānīs* desire something other than the Supreme Lord and thus their minds are attracted to changeable products of illusion and external objects of sense gratification, their absorption in various changing, ephemeral objects is only momentary. Thus the great qualities of saintly persons cannot find a place in their hearts permanently or for any duration of time.” Today we may see some good qualities in something and consider it excellent, but over the course of time that excellence does not remain constant, being differently seen in the eyes of different viewers from different points of view at different times. Hari-janas, however, are eternal and their activities are eternal. All the perceived and perceiving beings of Vaikuṇṭha, moreover, are adorned with the transcendental qualities of being eternal, faultless, unlimited, and absolutely desirable.

Pure unalloyed Vaiṣṇavas are actually very rare. Those who can say, “Such ideal Vaiṣṇava character is most desirable,” are also seldom found in this world. Therefore the only means of achieving the highest goal of life is to simply hear and chant the topics of Hari and the Hari-janas. If for even a moment anyone, whether qualified or unqualified, down to the lowest sinner, factually recognizes that the saintly Hari-janas are the topmost entities in the fourteen worlds and beyond and that they are therefore most respectable, then their respective spiritual practices will certainly increase our festive joy. The number of such qualified devotees is such a small fraction of the world's population! Therefore it is most important that the supreme ideal position of the Hari-janas should be somewhat realized in the heart of every living entity.

The wicked tendency of dedicated Prakṛti-janas is to completely reject the worship of Hari. It is stated in the Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā, Chapter 19) as follows:

*tāra madhye `sthāvara', jaṅgama'—dui bheda
jaṅgame tiryak-jala-sthalacara-vibheda*

*tāra madhye manuṣya-jāti ati alpatara
tāra madhye mleccha, pulinda, baudha, śabara*

*veda-niṣṭha-madhye ardheka veda `mukhe' māne
veda-niṣiddha pāpa kare, dharma nāhi gaṇe*

*dharmācāri-madhye bahuta `karma-niṣṭha'
koṭi-karma-niṣṭha-madhye eka jñānī' śreṣṭha*

*koṭi-jñāni-madhye haya eka-jana `mukta'
koṭi-mukta-madhye `durlabha' eka kṛṣṇa-bhakta*

*kṛṣṇa-bhakta—niṣkāma, ataeva `śānta'
bhukti-mukti-siddhi-kāmī—sakali `aśānta'*

“The unlimited living entities can be divided into two divisions—those that can

move and those that cannot move. Among living entities that can move, there are birds, aquatics and animals.

“Although the living entities known as human beings are very small in quantity, that division may be still further subdivided, for there are many uncultured human beings like *mlecchas*, *pulindas*, *bauddhas* and *śabaras*.

“Among human beings, those who are followers of the Vedic principles are considered civilized. Among these, almost half simply give lip service while committing all kinds of sinful activities against these principles. Such people do not care for the regulative principles.

“Among the followers of Vedic knowledge, most are following the process of fruitive activity and distinguishing between good and bad work. Out of many such sincere fruitive actors, there may be one who is actually wise.

“Out of many millions of such wise men, one may actually become liberated [*mukta*], and out of many millions of such liberated persons, a pure devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa is very difficult to find.

“Because a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa is desireless, he is peaceful. Fruitive workers desire material enjoyment, *jñānīs* desire liberation, and yogis desire material opulence; therefore they are all lusty and cannot be peaceful.”

We find it written that there are only twelve Hari-janas in the four yugas—Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara, and Kali. Does this mean that the Hari-janas have given up

Vaiṣṇavism to serve the materialistic Prakṛti-janas? Is this the conclusion of the *śāstras*? Every living entity is constitutionally a servant of Kṛṣṇa, or a Hari-jana. The living entity is bound by the ropes of *māyā* in proportion to his forgetfulness of his identity as the servant of Kṛṣṇa. He then identifies himself as a *smārta*.

Mundane foolishness is greatly diminished for one who realizes that an unalloyed Hari-jana is worshipable throughout the three worlds and is nondifferent from Hari, as His servant.

By His sweet will, the Supreme Lord often sends His associates into this material world in order to treat the conditioned souls. This is also one of the Lord's tests. In order to spread His glories, to show how exclusively devoted to His service certain Hari-janas are, and to bring other Hari-janas back to His abode, the supreme enjoyer of transcendental pastimes sends His own associate or associates into this material world as His “devotee-incarnations.” The actual facts are distorted if such personalities are counted among those who have become perfect by regulated practice. Those Hari-janas who appear within this world as *bhakta-avatāras* before, during, or after the appearance of the Lord are not in the category of *sādhana-siddha* devotees. And those Hari-janas who are followers of the twelve perfect devotees are counted among the *sādhana-siddha* devotees.

While studying the history of the Śrī-sampradāya, we came to know that twelve perfect associates of the Lord appear at different times in this world from Vaikuṇṭha in order to benefit the living entities. Also from authoritative Gauḍīya texts such as *Śrī Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā* we can learn of the identities the Lord and His associates of Goloka and Vaikuṇṭha assume in *gaura-līlā*. When a living entity achieves perfection by worshiping Hari and realizes his perfect and uncontaminated status as a servant of Kṛṣṇa, he then discovers his own eternal identity and the Lord becomes constantly manifest to him. Persons who are averse to the Hari-janas, however, can never understand this fact.

The activities and symptoms of Vaiṣṇavas are completely beyond the

understanding of persons with material intelligence. During the four *yugas*, innumerable Hari-janas have honestly worshiped the Supreme Lord, showing a perfect example in their lives. By the hostile counteractive measures of the *smārtas*, they were neither broken-hearted, discouraged, nor induced to give up their position as Hari-janas. Those who are unfortunate and less intelligent become bound by the results of pious and impious activities and create enmity with the Hari-janas.

The *Vaiṣṇava-mañjuṣā* quotes the following from the *Prapannāmṛta*, Chapter Seventy-four:

kāṣāra-bhūta-mahad-āhvaya-bhaktisārāḥ
śrīmac-chaṭhāri-kulaśekhara-viṣṇucittāḥ

bhaktāṅghri-reṇu-munivāha-catuṣ-kavīndrāḥ
te divya-sūraya iti prathitā daśorvyām

<i>godā yatīndra-miśrābhyām</i>	<i>dvādaśaitān vidur budhāḥ</i>
<i>visṛjya godām madhura-</i>	<i>kavinā saha sattama</i>
<i>kecid dvādaśa-saṅkhyātān</i>	<i>vadanti vibudhottamāḥ</i>

The history of these associates of the Lord in the Śrī-sampradāya are described in Sanskrit language in the two books *Divya-sūri-carita* and *Prapannāmṛta*; in the Maṇipravāla language, which is a mixture of Sanskrit and Tamil, in the books *Guru-paramaparāi-prabhāva*, *Prabandha-sāra*, and *Upadeśa-ratna-mālāi*; and in the Dravidian Tamil language in the book *Paḍa-naḍai-vilakkam*.

(1) Kāṣāra Muni, or Sara Yogī (Payaga-i Ālvār), (2) Bhūta Yogī (Pudatta Ālvār), who was an incarnation of the Lord's conch, (3) Bhrānta Yogī, or Mahad (Pe Ālvār), (4) Bhaktisāra (Tirumaḍisāippirāṇ Ālvār), (5) Śaṭhāri, also known as Śaṭhakopa, Parāṅkuśa, and Bakulābharaṇa (Nammā Ālvār), (6) Kulaśekhara (Kulaśekhara Ālvār), who was an incarnation of the Kaustubha gem, (7) Viṣṇucitta (Peri-i Ālvār), who was an incarnation of Garuḍa, (8) Bhaktāṅghrireṇu (Toṇḍāraḍippaḍi Ālvār), (9) Munivāha, also known as Yogīvāha and Prāṇanātha (Tiruppāṇi Ālvār), who was an incarnation of Śrīvatsa, (10) Catukavi, or Parakāl (Tirumaṅga-i Ālvār), who was an incarnation of the Lord's bow, (11) Godā (Āṇḍāl), who was an incarnation of Nīlā Lakṣmī, (12) Rāmānuja (Yambārumānār, Uda-iyāvār, Ilāi Ālvār), who was an incarnation of Lakṣmaṇa, and (13) Madhura Kavi (Madhura Kavigal Ālvār).

It is not that only South Indian devotees have come from Vaikuṇṭha; if we look at the pastimes of the pure devotees of Bengal, we will realize that they are also eternal Hari-janas. We will now quote a few examples from the *Gaura-gaṇoddeśa*, *Rāmānuja-carita*, and *Madhva-carita*.

Those who have attained perfection in their *bhajana* have realized their own constitutional position. But nowadays in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava-sampradāya some immature *pañcarātri-ka-mantra* traders are presenting imaginary material names and forms as the goal of life and the path of perfection (*siddha-praṇālī*); in this way they gratify the minds of their disciples as well as disclose their own foolishness and ignorance of the Vaiṣṇava literatures. We are not talking about these persons. The realizations of those who came to know their constitutional position by the strength of their authentic worship of Hari (*hari-bhajana*) were often written down by their disciples in various parts of India at various times.

We do not wish speak further on this subject. Yet it is also true that universally honored persons like Śrī Madhvācārya, the incarnation of Vāyu, Bhīma, or Hanumān; Śrī Rāmānuja, the incarnation of Saṅkarṣaṇa; and Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas like Prabhuvāra Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Prabhuvāra Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, Prabhuvāra Śrī Raghunātha Gosvāmī, Prabhu Śrī Narottama Ṭhākura, Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu, Prabhu Śrī Narahari Sarakāra Ṭhākura, Īśvarī Śrī Śrīmatī Jāhnavā Devī, and others, as well as Śrīpāda Viśvanātha Cakravartī Prabhu, Śrīpāda Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana Prabhu, various *śrīpāda-siddha-bābājī* Prabhus, Prabhuvāra Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and Śrīpāda Paramahansa Śrī Śrī Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrī Gaurakiśora dāsa Prabhuvāra never performed devotional service with the mentality of mortal living beings fallen in the pit of *smārta* attitudes. These personalities had all realized their individual spiritual identities and, being fixed in pure devotional service, they revealed the transcendental nature of their *bhajana*. Mortal beings who do not understand the *bhāgavata* or *pañcarātri*ka paths, who are imperfect, expert in the false egoism of material birth and so on, and desirous of taking the post of *ācārya* for the sake of money can never become Hari-janas. They are all nondevotees. Their acting as family gurus is just like the mundane activities of weavers, potters, blacksmiths, cobblers, shopkeepers, reciters, singers, and drummers. But this is completely different from the transcendental faith of the Vaiṣṇavas. Since we are shoe carriers for the Hari-janas, we also agree with this description.

The Hari-janas are divided into five types according to their taking shelter of each of the five primary *rasas*—*śānta*, *dāsyā*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya*, and *mādhurya*. There is a further division into two categories: If one takes shelter of regulative devotional service, which is predominated by appreciation of the Lord's opulences on the strength of the injunctions of scriptures and the spiritual master, that is called *vaidha-mārga*; and if one follows according to his own taste a particular resident of Vraja and accepts devotional service as his constitutional engagement, it is called *rāga-mārga*. This is explained in the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā*, Chapter Twenty-four, as follows:

‘vidhi-bhakta’, ‘rāga-bhakta’,—dui-vidha nāma

dui-vidha bhakta haya cāri cāri prakāra
pāriṣada, sādhana-siddha, sādha-gaṇa āra

jāta-ajāta-rati-bhede sādha-dui bheda
vidhi-rāga-mārga cāri cāri—aṣṭa bheda

vidhi-bhaktye nitya-siddha pāriṣada—‘dāsa’
‘sakhā’ ‘guru’ ‘kānta-gaṇa’,—cāri-vidha prakāśa

sādha-siddha—dāsa, sakhā, guru, kānta-gaṇa
jāta-rati sādha-bhakta—cāri-vidha jana

ajāta-rati sādha-bhakta,—e cāri prakāra
vidhi-mārga bhakte ṣoḍaśa bheda pracāra

rāga-mārga aiche bhakte ṣoḍaśa vibheda
dui mārga ātmārāmera batriśa vibheda

“There are two types of *ātmārāmas*—one is engaged in regulative devotional service and the other is engaged in spontaneous devotional service.

“The *ātmārāmas* engaged in regulative and spontaneous devotional service are further categorized into four groups. There are the eternal associates, the associates who have become perfect by devotional service, and those who are engaged in devotional service and are called *sādhaka*.

“Those who are practicing devotional service are either mature or immature. Therefore the *sādhakas* are of two types. Since the devotees execute either regulative devotional service or spontaneous devotional service and there are four groups within these two divisions, altogether there are eight varieties.

“By executing regulative devotional service, one is elevated to the platform of an eternally perfect associate—such as a servant, friend, superior or beloved woman. These are of four varieties.

“Among those who have perfected themselves by devotional service, there are servants, friends, superiors and beloved damsels. Similarly, there are four types of mature devotees.

“Within the category of regulative devotional service, there are also immature devotees. These are also of four varieties. Thus in regulative devotional service there are altogether sixteen varieties.

“On the path of spontaneous devotional service, there are also sixteen categories of devotees. Thus there are thirty-two types of *ātmārāmas* enjoying the Supreme Lord on these two paths.”

The supremely pure devotional service given to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas by Śrīman Mahāprabhu is incomparable. This devotional service is not offered to any person within the fourteen worlds. The devotees have no object of service even in the waters of the Virajā, which is situated beyond the material universe and which cleanses one of the three modes of nature. This Virajā is the highest destination for those on the path of karma. Brahmaloka is situated on the other side of the Virajā. In the nondifferentiated Brahmaloka there is no recipient for one's devotional service. This is the highest destination attained through impersonal knowledge. Passing beyond Brahmaloka, one comes to the abode of Śrī Vaikuṇṭha, where Lord Nārāyaṇa resides. The regulated worshipers on the path of *pañcarātri*ka serve their worshipable Lord Nārāyaṇa here under the shelter of two and half *rasas*—*śānta*, *dāsyā*, and *sakhya* with awe and reverence. Above Vaikuṇṭha is Goloka Vṛndāvana, where Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra, who is the perfect object for all five *rasas*, is eternally worshiped by His devotees, who are the repositories of love. Devotional service is meant for Him alone. Since the Hari-janas' worshipable Lord is not present within the fourteen worlds as any material object, within the waters of the Virajā as the neutral balance of the material modes, or within Brahmaloka in formless Brahman, they have nothing to do with these places. The worshipable Lord of the *pañcarātri*ka Vaiṣṇavas resides in Vaikuṇṭha, and the worshipable Lord of the *bhāgavata* Vaiṣṇavas resides in Goloka. One should worship one of these Lords. In the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Madhya 19.151-154) Śrīman Mahāprabhu speaks as follows:

*brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva
guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja*

māli hañā kare sei bīja āropaṇa

śravaṇa-kīrtana-jale karaye secana

*upajiyā bāḍe latā 'brahmāṇḍa' bhedi' yāya
'virajā' 'brahma-loka' bhedi' 'para-vyoma' pāya*

*tabe yāya tad-upari 'goloka-vṛndāvana'
'kṛṣṇa-caraṇa'-kalpa-vṛkṣe kare ārohaṇa*

“The living entity is wandering up and down, from one planet to another, and he is very fortunate if by the mercy of the spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa Himself he can get the seed of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa.

“When a person receives the seed of devotional service, he should take care of it by becoming a gardener and sowing the seed in his heart. If he waters the seed gradually by the process of *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana* [hearing and chanting], the seed will begin to sprout.

“As one waters the *bhakti-latā-bija*, the seed sprouts, and the creeper gradually increases to the point where it penetrates the walls of this universe and goes beyond the Virajā River between the spiritual world and the material world. It attains Brahmaloḥka, the Brahman effulgence, and, penetrating through that stratum, it reaches the spiritual sky and the spiritual planet Goloka Vṛndāvana.

“Being situated in one's heart and being watered by *śravaṇa-kīrtana*, the *bhakti* creeper grows more and more. In this way it attains the shelter of the desire tree of the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, who is eternally situated in the planet known as Goloka Vṛndāvana in the topmost region of the spiritual sky.”

Nothing material, no matter how glorious, can be compared with these superexcellent devotees of the Lord. As one cannot compare a mustard seed with Mount Meru, a drop of water with the ocean, or a dwarf with the high sky, it is similarly improper to compare the prestige of the Hari-janas with any ordinary mundane prestige. We will now cite some examples from the scriptures and some narrations of the *mahājanas* regarding the pathetic results achieved by materially conditioned entities who endeavor to directly or indirectly criticize, envy, or disrespect such Hari-janas with either their speech, bodies, or minds.

The *Skanda Purāṇa* states:

*yo hi bhāgavataṁ lokam upahāsaṁ nṛpottama
karoti tasya naśyanti artha-dharma-yaśaḥ-sutāḥ*

*nindāṁ kurvanti ye mūḍhā vaiṣṇavānāṁ mahātmanāṁ
patanti piṭṛbhiḥ sārdhaṁ mahā-raurava-samjñite*

*hanti nindati vai dveṣṭi vaiṣṇavān nābhinandati
krudhyate yāti no harṣaṁ darśane patanāni śaṭ*

“O best of kings, if one derides an exalted devotee, he loses the results of his pious activities, his opulence, his reputation, and his sons. Those fools who blaspheme great Vaiṣṇavas fall down to the hell known as Mahāraurava, accompanied by their forefathers. Whoever kills or blasphemes a Vaiṣṇava, whoever is envious of or angry with a Vaiṣṇava, and whoever does not offer proper greetings or feel joy upon seeing a Vaiṣṇava certainly becomes fallen.”

In the *Amṛta-sāroddhāra* it is stated:

janma-prabhṛti yat kiñcit sukṛtaṁ samupārjitam
nāśam āyāti tat sarvaṁ pīḍayed yadi vaiṣṇavān

“If one gives pain to the Vaiṣṇavas, then the results of his pious activities like high birth and high caste are all destroyed.”

In the *Dvārakā-māhātmya* it is said:

kara-patraiś ca phālyante su-tīvrair yama-śāsanaiḥ
nindāṁ kurvanti ye pāpā vaiṣṇavānāṁ mahātmanāṁ

pūjito bhagavān viṣṇur janmāntara-śatair api
prasīdati na viśvātmā vaiṣṇave cāpamānite

“Those most sinful people who criticize great Vaiṣṇavas are subjected by Yamarāja to the severe punishment of being sliced in pieces by very sharp saws. Lord Hari, the Supersoul of the entire universe, is never pleased with the miscreant who insults a Vaiṣṇava, even if he has worshiped Viṣṇu for hundreds of births.”

Also in the *Skanda Purāṇa* it is said:

pūrvam kṛtvā tu sammānam avajñāṁ kurute tu yaḥ
vaiṣṇavānāṁ mahī-pāla sāvayō yāti saṅkṣayam

“O ruler of the world, one who first respects a Vaiṣṇava and then later insults him is vanquished along with his family.”

In the *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa*, *Kṛṣṇa-janma-khaṇḍa*, it is stated:

ye nindanti hr̥ṣīkeśam tad-bhaktam puṇya-rūpiṇam
śata-janmārjitam puṇyam teṣāṁ naśyati niścitam

te pacyante mahā-ghore kumbhīpāke bhayānake
bhakṣitāḥ kīṭa-saṅghena yāvac candra-divākarau

tasya darśana-mātreṇa puṇyam naśyati niścitam
gaṅgāṁ snātvā raviṁ dṛṣṭā tadā vidvān viśuddhyati

“Those who criticize Lord Hṛṣīkeśa or the Vaiṣṇavas, who are under His all-auspicious shelter, lose all the pious credits they have accrued in a hundred births. Such sinners rot in the Kumbhīpāka hell and are eaten by hordes of worms for as long as the sun and moon exist. If one sees a person who blasphemes Lord Viṣṇu and His devotees, then the results of all his pious activities are lost. When learned persons see such non-Vaiṣṇavas, they purify themselves by taking bath in the Ganges and looking at the sun.”

Śrī Rāmānujācārya has stated:

śrīmad bhāgavatārcanaṁ bhagavataḥ pūjā-vidher uttamam
śrī-viṣṇor avamānanād guru-taraṁ śrī-vaiṣṇavollaṅghanam
tīrthād acyuta-pāda-jād guru-taraṁ tīrtham tadīyāṅghri-jam

pūjanād viṣṇu-bhaktānāṁ puruṣārtho 'sti netaraḥ
teṣu tad-dveṣataḥ kiñcit nāsti nāśanam ātmanaḥ

śrī-vaiṣṇavair mahā-bhāgaiḥ sallāpam kārayet sadā
tadīya-dūṣaka-janān na paśyet puruṣādhamān

śrī-vaiṣṇavānām cihnāni dhṛtvāpi viṣayāturaiḥ
tailḥ sārdaṁ vañcaka-janaiḥ saha-vāsaṁ na kārayet

“The worship of Vaiṣṇavas is greater than the worship of the Supreme Lord. Insulting a Vaiṣṇava is more offensive than insulting Lord Viṣṇu. The water that has washed the feet of a devotee is more pure than the water that has washed the feet of Kṛṣṇa. There is no higher achievement than to worship a Vaiṣṇava. There is nothing more offensive than being envious of a Vaiṣṇava, which results in one's utter ruination. One should always converse with *mahā-bhāgavata* Vaiṣṇavas, and one should never see the lowest of mankind who criticizes Vaiṣṇavas. One should never reside with a duplicitous person who is attached to sense gratification and decorated with the signs of a Vaiṣṇava.”

It is described in the *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* (Madhya 5.145 and 10.102):

yata pāpa haya prajā janere himsile
tāra śata-guṇa haya vaiṣṇave nindile

“The sin committed by being envious of other living entities is multiplied a hundredfold if one criticizes a Vaiṣṇava.

ye pāpiṣṭha vaiṣṇavera jāti-buddhi kare
janma janma adhama-yonite ḍubi' mare

“The sinful person who considers a Vaiṣṇava as belonging to a particular caste repeatedly takes birth in abominable species life after life.”

In the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā, Chapter Seventeen, and Antya-līlā, Chapter Three, it is stated:

bhavānī-pūjāra saba sāmagrī lañā
rātre śrīvāsera dvāre sthāna lepāñā

“He placed all the paraphernalia for worshipping the goddess Durgā outside Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura's door.

madya-bhāṇḍa-pāṣe dhari' nija-ghare gela

“Then he placed a pot of wine beside all this.

tabe saba śiṣṭa-loka kare hāhākāra
aiche karma hethā kaila kon durācāra

hāḍike āniyā saba dūra karāila

“Then all the assembled gentlemen exclaimed, ‘What is this? What is this? Who has performed such mischievous activities? Who is that sinful man?’ They called for a sweeper [*hāḍi*], who threw all the items of worship far away.

tina dina rahi' sei gopāla-cāpāla
sarvāṅge ha-ila kuṣṭha, vahe rakta-dhāra

sarvāṅga beḍila kīṭe, kāṭe nirantara

“After three days, leprosy attacked Gopāla Cāpāla, and blood oozed from sores all over his body. He was incessantly covered with germs and insects bit him all over his body.

*āre pāpi, bhakta-dveṣi, tore na uddhārimu
koṭi-janma ei mate kīḍāya khāoyāimu*

“O sinful person, envious of pure devotees, I shall not deliver you! Rather, I shall have you bitten by these germs for many millions of years.

koṭi janma habe tora raurave patana

“ghaṭa-paṭiyā mūrkhā tuṇi bhakti kāṇhā jāna?

*haridāsa-ṭhākura tuṇi kaili apamāna!
sarva-nāśa habe tora, nā habe kalyāṇa”*

“You will have to fall down into hellish life for ten million births. You are a foolish logician, what do you know about the devotional service of the Lord? You have insulted Haridāsa Ṭhākura. Thus there will be a dangerous position for you. You should not expect anything auspicious.

kṛṣṇa-svabhāva,—bhakta-nindā sahite nā pāre

“The characteristic of Kṛṣṇa is that He cannot tolerate blasphemy of His devotees.” Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has written in his *Bhakti-sandarbhā*:

vaiṣṇava-nindā śravaṇe 'pi doṣa uktāḥ—

*nindāṁ bhagavataḥ śṛṇvaṁs tat-parasya janasya vā
tato nāpaiti yaḥ so 'pi yāty adhaḥ sukr̥tāc cyutaḥ*

*tato 'pagamaś cāsamarthasya eva. samarthena tu nindaka-jihvā chettavyā. tatrāpy
asmarthena sva-prāṇa-parityāgo 'pi kartavyaḥ. yathoktaṁ devyā—*

*karṇau pidhāya nirayād yad akalpa īše
dharmāvitary asṛṇibhir nṛbhir asyamāne*

*chindyāt prasahya ruśatīm asatām prabhuś cej
jihvām asūn api tato visrjet sa dharmāḥ*

“Not only those who criticize Vaiṣṇavas are faulty, but those who hear criticism of Vaiṣṇavas are also offenders. This is described in scriptures such as the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.74.40): ‘Anyone who fails to immediately leave the place where he hears criticism of the Supreme Lord or His faithful devotee will certainly fall down, bereft of his pious credit.’

“The injunction to leave the place is meant only for those who are unable to take any other steps. If one is able, he should cut out the tongue of he who is blaspheming the Vaiṣṇava. And if one is unable to do this, he should give up his life.

“In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (4.4.17) Satī, the daughter of Dakṣa, spoke like this: ‘If one hears an irresponsible person blaspheme the master and controller of religion or the Vaiṣṇavas, one should block his ears and go away if unable to punish him. But if one is able, then one should cut out the tongue of that miscreant, who is speaking such filthy language, and if unable to do this one should give up his own life—this is the religious principle.’”

Vyavahāra-kāṇḍa

Section Concerning Behavior

The readers have already been introduced to material and spiritual personalities in the previous two chapters. In this chapter we will discuss the comparison in the behavior of these two.

According to mundane consideration, one has to be qualified for any activity that he engages in. Otherwise, if an activity is performed by an unqualified person, there will be so many obstacles. Intelligent persons at different times have introduced various processes in order to benefit the people in general. Among these processes, some are beneficial for the present life and some are beneficial for the next life. Any simple-minded person can easily understand what is beneficial for the present life, yet being unable to experience subjects of the next life they introduce complex fallacious arguments. According to the variety of people's taste, behavior, and expertise, they reach various conclusions while discussing topics regarding the next life. People with similar natures who follow such people become attached to a particular opinion and reject contrary opinions. Generally, people in the mode of goodness have different opinions in every subject from those who are influenced by the modes of passion and ignorance. And when one is situated in pure goodness and exhibits a mood of indifference, his activities are distinct from the activities of one in goodness, which counteracts passion and ignorance. Conceptions regarding the next life in the hands of the four above-mentioned classes of thinkers assume four different forms. Thus there will certainly be differences among unregulated sense enjoyers, fruitive workers, mental speculators, and devotees. These four categories have descended through disciplic succession in various branches since time immemorial. People accept whatever they find favorable, and in this way they exhibit their individual qualifications.

If one speaks only of his own qualification without understanding other's qualifications, then there will be no benefit for the other party; rather this will create innumerable, never-ending arguments. That is why instructions according to one's qualification produce better results. We often hear about quarrels between two parties, and by taking sides we identify our position. This is called partiality. Yet as far as possible one should maintain neutrality on the strength of superior, noble education.

When realized through only the *saṁvit* aspect, the Absolute Truth appears devoid of eternal bliss and is called Brahman; when realized through the combined *saṁvit* and *sandhinī* aspects, the Absolute Truth still appears devoid of *hlādinī*, or spiritual bliss, and is called Paramātmā; and when the *sac-cid-ānanda* aspects are simultaneously manifest, the Absolute Truth is called Bhagavān. Although the Absolute Truth is one, the knowers of the Truth have realized this *advaya-jñāna*, or nondual supreme consciousness, in three different features. An absence of *hlādinī*, or eternal bliss, from the Absolute Truth is contradictory to *advaya-jñāna*. In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (1.2.11) it is stated:

vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam
brahmeti paramātmēti bhagavān iti śabdyate

Dualist consciousness is called *māyā* from the aspect of knowledge, *viyoga* from the aspects of existence and awareness, and *abhakti* (nondevotion) from the aspects of eternity, knowledge, and bliss. Learned transcendentalists who know the science of the Absolute Truth call this nondual consciousness “the nondual reality” (*advaya-tattva*). They call that one entity by the three names Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān. When the Māyāvāda philosophy is resorted to, Brahman and Paramātmā are considered different from Bhagavān.

Some learned scholars are *brāhmaṇas*, some are yogis, and some are *bhāgavatas*. None of these three categories of men maintain material desires. Practically it is seen that when any of the above-mentioned transcendentalists forget their constitutional position as a result of dualistic consciousness born of material absorption and they consider themselves to some extent the doers in the field of activities due to various material desires, they then exhibit mutual differences in their tastes. They are then swallowed by the material kingdom's conceptions of superiority and inferiority. But when they realize their constitutional position, their fruitive mentality is diminished and they develop equal vision. At this point we do not wish to enter further into the complexities of the scriptures. But we can say this much: for one who has a particular material taste, that taste appears supreme. The faith of living beings is determined by how they identify themselves. Therefore if we want to make an impartial comparison, we should not be overcome by distorted understanding like the *karmīs*. Our impartial statements will never be in agreement with those of the *karmīs*. Therefore, until the *karmīs* advance to a higher platform, they will not be able to understand our impartial statements; they will wrongly consider us selfish like themselves and hold us in contempt, thus uselessly wasting their time.

We have already discussed eligibility and position. One kind of eligibility may be strange to another person, but when he also attains that eligibility it becomes palatable to him. Although there are different positions, steadiness in one's own position is called piety and the opposite is called impiety. When one is situated in a particular position, he can see the faults of others; but if the statuses are equal, then there is no opportunity for such differences. If the *brāhmaṇas*, yogis, and devotees do not consider each other's qualifications, there will certainly be quarrels among them and various difficulties in ascertaining their relative positions. If one impartially and carefully determines the position and eligibility of a subject, he will be able to reconcile everything properly; otherwise he merely becomes disturbed and accomplishes nothing.

Persons whose behavior we are presently comparing have various goals. Hence, the differences in their behavior are inevitable. Prakṛti-jana refers to an enjoyer of temporary sense gratification. The term Prakṛty-atīta-jana, or one who is transcendental to material nature, is used to refer to a renunciate, while the term Hari-jana refers to the community of those who give up the propensities for enjoying and renouncing and are interested in the eternal service of Hari. Just because the Prakṛti-janas do not respect the behavior of the Prakṛty-atīta-janas or the Hari-janas, that does not mean that the behavior of the Hari-janas is not respectable. Although the Hari-janas appear similar to the Prakṛti-janas while living in this world, that does not mean that their behavior will not differ. While living with the Prakṛti-janas, the Prakṛty-atīta-janas approve their activities, and since they deny their own liberated position they do not feel inclined to behave

differently from others while living in this world. But because the contrary moods of the Hari-janas' eternal position are more or less opposite to those of the Prakṛti-janas of this material world, there are bound to be differences between them. Differences in transcendental realization is the cause of this discrimination. The three features of the nondual Absolute Truth are endowed with energies. Bhagavān is the supreme controller of all illusory and spiritual energies, Paramātmā, as the indwelling Supersoul, is the Lord of most of the illusory energy and a portion of the spiritual energy, while Brahman is pure consciousness in isolation from all qualities that are known in terms of the Supreme Lord's energies. As an object is perceived differently by different senses, so the Absolute Truth, although one, appears in three forms. These three, however, should not be considered actually different. It has already been described that the possessor of the material and spiritual energies cannot be perceived simply through impersonal knowledge. Although through the combined features of the *sat* and *cit* aspects the Supreme Lord's mastery over the illusory energy and the variegatedness of *Vaikuṇṭha* is found, these features do not reveal the fullness of the expanded pastimes of the energy and the energetic. The Supreme Lord fully manifests only through the combination of the *sat*, *cit*, and *ānanda* aspects. Thus the indifferent *brāhmaṇas* who know Brahman, the yogis who realize the Supersoul, and the devotees of the Supreme Lord are all engaged in serving the *advaya-jñāna* Absolute Truth. The *karmīs*, who are full of material desires, the *jñānīs*, who have renounced material desires, and the devotees, who have developed faith in topics of Lord Hari, are all yogis. The difference between them is that some are *karma-yogīs*, some are *jñāna-yogīs*, and others are *bhakti-yogīs*. These three types of persons have the *advaya-jñāna* Truth alone as their asset. The devotees of the Lord are in full knowledge of Kṛṣṇa, the yogis are in full knowledge of the indwelling Supersoul, who resides in the heart of everyone and is the master of *Vaikuṇṭha*, and the *brāhmaṇas* are in full knowledge of impersonal Brahman, which is devoid of variegated, transcendental, blissful pastimes. On the pretext of philosophical argument, no one should say that the devotees have no knowledge of Kṛṣṇa, the yogis have no knowledge of the Supersoul, and the *brāhmaṇas* have no knowledge of Brahman. All three in their own capacity are actually worshipers of the *advaya-jñāna* Truth.

If the *brāhmaṇas* who know Brahman desire to practice *yoga*, they can do so; and if they desire to worship Kṛṣṇa, they can also do so. If the devotees of Kṛṣṇa become averse to worshipping Kṛṣṇa, in other words, if they fall from the path of devotional service, they can become *karma-yogīs* or *jñāna-yogīs*; and if they fall from knowledge of Kṛṣṇa or knowledge of the Supersoul, they can become *brāhmaṇas* on the platform of impersonal knowledge. The yogis are situated on a platform below the devotees of the Lord, and the *brāhmaṇas* who know Brahman are situated on a platform below the yogis. The yogis who have realized the Supersoul can advance to the position of the devotees or degrade to the position of impersonalist *brāhmaṇas*. When *brāhmaṇas* accept the doctrine of fruitive activities in the world of material qualities, they also become affected by material qualities. In such a condition, the *brāhmaṇas*' impersonal knowledge becomes dormant. And when they are freed from material qualities by the influence of impersonal knowledge, they can also become transcendental *brāhmaṇas*.

When the mode of passion is mixed with the mode of goodness, then a *brāhmaṇa*

becomes identified as a *kṣatriya*. When ignorance is mixed with passion, one is known as a *vaiśya*. And when the mode of ignorance is prominent, then one gives up the mode of goodness, the status of a twice-born, and becomes known as a *śūdra*. Since materialistic *brāhmaṇas* are conditioned by the material mode of goodness, they accept various *varṇas* within the material kingdom. When they are situated in the nonmaterial kingdom free from material qualities, they become known as transcendental impersonalist *brāhmaṇas* in the form of knowers of exclusive, pure consciousness. When they are in the nonmaterial kingdom free from material qualities and endowed with knowledge of both matter and spirit, they become known as yogis in the form of mixed *jñānīs*. When they are in the nonmaterial kingdom free from material qualities, those yogis who are knowers of Brahman endowed with all spiritual qualities are known as devotees of Vrajendra-nandana, who is the personification of spiritual pastimes. Therefore all living entities are eternal servants of Kṛṣṇa. Giving up their eternal propensities, these servants of Kṛṣṇa become yogis, *brāhmaṇas*, members of the four materially conditioned *varṇas*, animals, birds, insects, flies, worms, plants, and so on.

The Supreme Lord eternally enjoys pastimes in various forms as *svayam-rūpa*, *prakāśa*, *tad-ekātma*, *svāmśa*, and *vibhinnāmśa*. The *vibhinnāmśas* are known as “separated parts” because there is a quantitative difference between them and the others like the *svāmśa*. But there is no difference in their spiritual qualities. Since the *vibhinnāmśas* possess spiritual qualities in minute quantity, they are prone to come under the control of *māyā*, the illusory energy of the fully spiritual *svāmśa*; but they are not eternally under the control of the external material energy. The impersonal Brahman is the incomplete manifestation of the Supreme Lord. Due to the Supreme Lord's complete manifestation, the same unbroken Truth appears as the Paramātmā, or Supersoul. When this feature of the Supreme Lord takes the role as controller of the living entities, He is known as Paramātmā.

The unlimited energies of the Supreme Lord are divided into three categories. His internal energy manifests His eternally relishable qualities in the form of His spiritual pastimes. His external energy creates superior and inferior undesirable conditions within finite time and produces the temporary nature of things. When His separated marginal energy, the living entities, become conditioned, they become enjoyers of the external energy; but when they become liberated, they eternally engage in the service of the Lord, who is the supreme enjoyer. When the infinitesimal living entities become inclined to serve the undivided supreme consciousness, they no longer remain controlled by the external energy. The multitotal energetic Viṣṇu, who resides in everyone's heart as the Supersoul, maintains entire universes through His external energy. The Supreme Lord as the *antaryāmī*, the inner witness, resides in the topmost abode of Goloka, in the spiritual sky of Mahā-Vaikuṇṭha, in the three bodies of water [*kāraṇodaka*, *garbhodaka*, and *kṣīrodaka*], in the *vibhinnāmśa* living entities, and in the kingdom of Durgā. In Goloka and in the Vaikuṇṭhas He is eternally present in His original identity as *svayam-rūpa* and *svayam-prakāśa*. He appears in the kingdom of Durgā from time to time for particular purposes. Although the fully independent Lord is the master of *māyā*, He descends into her kingdom. His eternal associates, the Vaiṣṇavas, can and do come to this material world in their eternal spiritual forms. When the *vibhinnāmśa* living entities become averse to the service of Hari due to being subject to the control of *māyā*, they enjoy the fruits of their activities

through their enjoyment prone material minds and bodies. But when such living entities become free from the coverings of karma and *jñāna* and devoid of material desires through the process of *sādhana-bhakti*, they then cultivate the favorable service of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Being liberated from the bondage of *māyā*, they are established in the kingdom of *bhāva* and *prema*, or ecstasy and love, and become famous as *sādhana-siddha* devotees.

Due to being situated in the marginal position, living entities who are averse to Hari assume the nature of mixed consciousness; in other words, when the marginal energy living entities mix with the external energy, they consider themselves the enjoyers and then enter the material world. The cause of the spirit soul's coming to live in this world in aversion to Kṛṣṇa is his misuse of his free will. When this aversion becomes strong, the living entities accept a material mind and body in order to enjoy the temporary material world and thus come under the control of fruitive reactions. And when, on the strength of pious activities, they become transcendental to the *varṇāśrama* principles, which distinguish superior and inferior behavior in this world, they become *paramahamsas* by perfecting themselves through *sādhana*. Those who become *paramahamsas* are the Hari-janas. And those who fall from the platform of *paramahamsa* and engage in fruitive activities while associating with matter are situated on the platform of *varṇāśrama*. Conditioned souls who are situated on the platform of *varṇāśrama* consider that the Vaiṣṇava *paramahamsas* are also situated on the platform of *varṇāśrama*. But when they see that the Hari-janas are actually different from the Prakṛti-janas, they become favorably inclined towards Kṛṣṇa. When conditioned souls take shelter of the Vaiṣṇavas' lotus feet without duplicity, they give up their ideas of impersonalism and fruitive work. The living entities in this material world who are subject to punishment from Yamarāja consider the Hari-janas, who are offered obeisances by Yamarāja, as Prakṛti-janas. In order to exhibit their humility, the swanlike *paramahamsa* Hari-janas follow *varṇāśrama* principles and thus deceive the Prakṛti-janas. Actually the Prakṛti-janas and the Hari-janas are completely opposite in nature to each other, like illusion and reality.

While remaining in the material world, the living entities display two different tastes regarding their object of worship. The first taste is for Brahman, which is impersonal, without variety, and without qualities. Because Brahman is eternally without variety, it is not a suitable object of enjoyment for the living entities who are impelled by the illusory energy. That is why those who have a taste for impersonalism imagine five or seven demigods as worshipable, while in reality they are establishing various material things as their objects of worship. The second taste is for eternal spiritual variegatedness. The worshipable object for such living entities has an eternal name, an eternal form, eternal qualities, eternal associates, and eternal pastimes. The impersonalists, however, consider that in the liberated state there is neither variegatedness nor spiritual pastimes—this mundane, proud explanation is conceived by those who are nondevotees of Viṣṇu. Some of these persons even deny the existence of the spiritual world and become known as atheists.

There are three main opinions found among the living entities—full rejection of the existence of the spiritual world, full acceptance of the existence of the spiritual world, and the uncertain position of both accepting and rejecting the existence of the spiritual world. Among those who reject the existence of the spiritual world,

some have concluded that the spiritual world has no existence at all, some have concluded that its existence is doubtful, and others say it is unknowable. Those who fully accept the existence of the spiritual world realize the supermundane Personality of Godhead in two different features—*aiśvarya* and *mādhurya*, or opulence and sweetness. And those who both accept and reject the existence of the spiritual world consider that the transcendental eternal existence of the living entities is to be either in complete knowledge or devoid of knowledge. Due to their lack of faith in the existence of the spiritual world, those who reject its existence endeavor for material enjoyment while living in this world. In their independent spirit they do not serve anyone other than themselves. Following in their footsteps, those who claim to accept the existence of the spiritual world accept the impersonal Brahman as the supreme goal while concocting various objects of worship for themselves.

There are two concepts of impersonal philosophy—denial of spiritual propensities and denial of spiritual activities, both devoid of eternal worship. When people consider the absence of the conscious function as the goal of life it results in *śūnyavāda*, or voidism. And when they consider the idea that consciousness is devoid of activity it is called *Māyāvāda*, or spiritualism without variety. In their ordinary activities, the voidists give respect to the *nīti-śāstras*, or social codes. And the *Māyāvādīs*, considering consciousness covered by ignorance as the Supreme Lord, create five different idols and address the totality of ignorance as the Supreme Lord. Due to the absence of nondual knowledge, the so-called liberated *Māyāvādīs* consider themselves as temporary worshipers and worship five gods. Observing their complete absence of devotional propensities, Śrī Vyāsadeva has written in the *Padma Purāṇa* as follows:

dvau bhūta-sargau loke 'smin daiva āsura eva ca
viṣṇu-bhaktāḥ smṛto daiva āsuras tad-viparyayaḥ

“There are two kinds of created beings in this world, godly and demoniac. Those dedicated to the devotional service of Lord Viṣṇu are godly, and those opposed to such service are demoniac.”

In other words, *varṇāśrama-dharma* is of two varieties. That which is established on the basis of devotional service to Lord Viṣṇu is called *daiva*, and the opposite variety, meaning that kind of *varṇāśrama* in which there is no exclusive devotion to the Supreme Lord, which denies His eternal name, form, qualities, and pastimes, and which considers spiritual objects as illusory and thus recommends the worship of five gods is called material enjoyment-prone *adaiva*.

An elaboration on this verse is given by Śrī Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.5.3) as follows:

ya eṣāṁ puruṣaṁ sākṣād ātma-prabhavam īśvaram
na bhajanty avajānanti sthānād bhraṣṭāḥ patanty adhaḥ

“If any of the members of the four *varṇas* (*brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas*, or *śūdras*) and four *āśramas* (*brahmacārī*, *gṛhastha*, *vānaprastha*, or *sannyāsa*) fail to worship or intentionally disrespect the Personality of Godhead, who is the source of their own creation, they fall down from their position, in other words, they fall from *daiva-varṇāśrama* into the contrary situation of the demonic *varṇāśrama*.”

The *varṇāśrama* followed by the atheists or those who worship five gods is nothing like the *daiva-varṇāśrama* ascertained by the devotees of Viṣṇu. It is stated in the

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (7.11.35) as follows:

<i>yasya yal lakṣaṇam proktam</i>	<i>pumso varṇābhivyañjakam</i>
<i>yad anyatrāpi dṛśyeta</i>	<i>tat tenaiva vinirdiśet</i>

“If one shows the symptoms of being a *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* or *śūdra*, as described above, even if he has appeared in a different class, he should be accepted according to those symptoms of classification.” If one rejects this process, he will incur sin. The process of assigning designations is that one should give an unreformed person the opportunity to purify himself by the ten purificatory processes, engage in studying the *Vedas*, engage in the six activities beginning with worship and teaching worship, become situated in pure conduct, eat the remnants of the spiritual master, become attached to the spiritual master, observe regular vows, and be truthful. But if the symptoms of *vaiśyas* and *śūdras* appear in a *brāhmaṇa* who has undergone the ten purificatory processes, then either he should be deprived of his purified status or he should be engaged appropriately as a *vaiśya*—this is honesty. To act contrary to this is selfishness and laxity in following the injunctions of scripture.

From the statements of the *smṛtis*, as quoted by Nīlakaṇṭha in his commentary on *Mahābhārata* (Śānti-parva 189.2), we receive the following information:

yasyaite 'ṣṭa-catvāriṃśat saṁskārāḥ sa brāhmaṇaḥ

“One who has performed these forty-eight kinds of *saṁskāras* is a *brāhmaṇa*.⁷ In Śrī Yāmūnācārya's *Āgama-prāmānya* it is stated:

yad apy uktam garbhādhānādi-dāhānta-saṁskārāntara-sevanād bhāgavatānām abrahmaṇyam iti, tatrāpy-ajñānam evāparādhyati, na punar āyusmato doṣaḥ; yad ete vaṁśa-paramparayā vājasaneyā-sākhām adhīyānāḥ kātyāyanādi-grhyokta-mārgeṇa garbhādhānādi-saṁskārān kurvate; ye punaḥ sāvītry-anuvācāna-prabhṛti-trayī-dharma-tyāgeṇa ekāyana-śruti-vihitān eva catvāriṃśat saṁskārān kurvate te 'pi vaśākhā-grhyoktam artham yathā-vad anuṭiṣṭhamānāḥ na sākhāntarīya-karmānuṣṭhānād brāhmaṇyāt pracyavante, anyeṣāṁ api para-śākhā-vihita-karmānuṣṭhāna-nimittābrāhmaṇya-prasaṅgāt.

“Those who say that the *bhāgavatas* are fallen from the status of *brāhmaṇas* because they have given up the Vedic *saṁskāras* beginning with the *garbhādhāna-saṁskāra* and ending with the funeral ceremony and have accepted an alternative system of purificatory rituals are ignorant offenders. In fact, however, the long-lived speakers of these statement are not at all wrong, since having studied the *Vājasaneyā* branch of the *Vedas* which belongs to their family tradition, the *bhāgavatas* perform their *garbhādhāna* and other *saṁskāras* in accordance to the methods prescribed by the *Gṛhya-sūtras* of Kātyāyana and others. Furthermore, these *bhāgavatas* who have abandoned Vedic duties such as *sāvītry-anuvācāna* (chanting the Vedic mantras which establish someone as a wearer of the sacrificial thread) and instead observe the forty *saṁskāras* enjoined in the *Ekāyana-śruti* are properly adhering to the principles enunciated in the *Gṛhya-sūtras* of their own branch and thus have never fallen from the status of *brāhmaṇas* on account of not performing the rituals of a different branch. After all, if by not following the rules of all the Vedic branches a *brāhmaṇa* becomes fallen, then the followers of other branches would also have to be considered fallen from brahminical status because they do not perform the rituals of other branches.”

The community of sense enjoyers who are devoid of devotional service and bereft

of simplicity disrespect the Absolute Truth and can never be accepted by the initiated devotees of Lord Viṣṇu. In order to maintain their self-interest, the ignorant asslike community exhibit envy of *daiva-varṇāśrama* and thus prove their disqualification. Simply because the demoniac community is fallen, that does not mean the *daiva-varṇāśrama* community has to join them. The devotee community is always ready to disassociate from the demoniac followers of Viśvaśravā's son [Rāvaṇa] and always eager to associate with Hiranyakaśipu's son, Prahlāda. The godly devotees of Viṣṇu also appear in demoniac families. And it is not unheard of for those who are averse to the devotional service of Lord Viṣṇu to take birth in the families of demigods and *brāhmaṇas*. The devotees of Viṣṇu can take birth in all types of families. Yet if one considers that they are following demoniac *varṇāśrama* because they are situated in an inappropriate family due to their past activities and birth in a particular family, the *daiva-varṇāśrama* community, who are devoted to Viṣṇu, do not agree. The *ācāryas* of the Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas* do not accept either the worship of five gods by the impersonalist *sampradāya* or the immature application of *varṇāśrama* principles. Due to humility, the swanlike Vaiṣṇavas do not formally accept the symptoms of *varṇāśrama*. That is why the Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* did not always push them to give up their humility and perform ordinary Vedic rituals. Whenever the Vaiṣṇavas are abused by the followers of demoniac *varṇāśrama*, pure *varṇāśrama* is protected by the understanding that *varṇa* is determined according to qualification.

We have cited the histories of more than a thousand followers of pure *varṇāśrama* in the *Prakṛti-jana-kāṇḍa* of this book. Apart from those, many other topics concerning the topmost position of Vaiṣṇavas who renounce nondevotional *varṇāśrama* and nondevotee behavior are found in the scriptures. Particularly due to their Vaiṣṇava behavior, there was no obstacle in accepting them as initiated *brāhmaṇas*.

The following of pure *varṇāśrama* has not been stopped in the Śrī Rāmānandī branch of the Śrī Rāmānuja-sampradāya. Pure *varṇāśrama* was functioning in this same way in ancient times. Due to the gradual increase in selfishness and material absorption the real purport of *varṇāśrama* has been forgotten and a lifeless *varṇāśrama* has become current. We cannot call the current system *daiva-varṇāśrama*. Śrīmad Gopāla Bhaṭṭapāda, the *smṛty-ācārya* of the Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava-sampradāya, has given the arrangement for purifying qualified students of all *varṇas* through ten Vedic *samskāras* in pursuance of the *daiva-varṇāśrama* principles. Following his directions, the *samskāra* of *brāhmaṇa* initiation by qualification was begun long ago and is still practiced today in the *sampradāya* of Śrī Śyāmānanda-deva, the branch of Śrī Nityānanda, the *sampradāya* of Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Navina-hoḍa, and the branch of Gaura's follower Raghunandana. Moreover, descendants of various branches of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *grhasthas* who have fallen from the standard due to their indifference to spiritual life consider themselves as belonging to their previous seminal caste. It is the nature of unqualified people to identify themselves as belonging to a low class. Sometimes the seminal descendants of an *ācārya* become bereft of devotional service and think that following the principles of demoniac *varṇāśrama* is their constitutional duty. Fearing their social degradation, such people even associate intimately with nondevotee worshipers of the five gods. Such exchanges are meant only for fallen people who are indifferent to spiritual life.

Although it is accepted that out of Vaiṣṇava magnanimity a devotee of Viṣṇu can take birth among miscreants, the statement of the scriptures that says, “A Vaiṣṇava purifies and delivers whichever family he appears in,” has now simply turned into some words. All the same, we should know that a Vaiṣṇava does not take birth in any family at all. It should be understood that even if Vaiṣṇavas do take birth, demoniac self-centered communities do not accept them. The pure form of *varṇāśrama* can never be found in any society that has become degraded due to the absence of devotion to Viṣṇu. The *Padma Purāṇa* states:

<i>śva-pākam iva nekṣeta</i>	<i>loke vipram avaiṣṇavam</i>
<i>vaiṣṇavo varṇo-bāhyo 'pi</i>	<i>punāti bhuvana-trayam</i>
<i>na sūdrā bhagavad-bhaktās</i>	<i>te tu bhāgavatā matāḥ</i>
<i>sarva-varṇeṣu te sūdrā</i>	<i>ye na bhaktā janārdane</i>
<i>sūdraṁ vā bhagavad-bhaktam</i>	<i>niṣādam śva-pacam tathā</i>
<i>vikṣate jāti-sāmānyāt</i>	<i>sa yāti narakam dhruvam</i>
<i>bhaktir aṣṭa-vidhā hy eṣā</i>	<i>yasmin mlecche 'pi vartate</i>
<i>sa viprendro muni-śreṣṭhaḥ</i>	<i>sa jñānī sa ca paṇḍitaḥ</i>
<i>tasmai deyam tato grāhyam</i>	<i>sa ca pūjyo yathā hariḥ</i>

“If a person born in a *brāhmaṇa* family is an *avaiṣṇava*, a nondevotee, one should not see his face, exactly as one should not see the face of a *caṇḍāla*, or dog-eater. A Vaiṣṇava, however, can purify the three worlds, no matter what *varṇa* he was born in.

“Devotees of the Lord are never *sūdras*, rather they are all first-class *bhāgavatas*. But if one is not a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa, he should be considered a *sūdra* even if he was born in a *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya* or *vaiśya* family.

“One who considers a devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead who was born in a family of *sūdras*, *niṣādas*, or *caṇḍālas* to belong to that particular caste certainly goes to hell.”

“If these eight types of devotional service are seen in a person, even if he was born in a family of *mlecchas*, then such a topmost *brāhmaṇa*, best of sages, *jñānī*, and *paṇḍita* should be offered food and his remnants should be accepted, for such a Vaiṣṇava is as worshipable as the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

All these statements of the scriptures are meant for uplifting the fallen followers of *varṇāśrama* and for humiliating the followers of *varṇāśrama* who are devoid of devotional service.

The *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.17.10, 12-13) states:

<i>ādau kṛta-yuge varṇo</i>	<i>nṛṇāṁ haṁsa iti smṛtaḥ</i>
<i>kṛta-kṛtyāḥ prajā jātyā</i>	<i>tasmāt kṛta-yugam viduḥ</i>
<i>tretā-mukhe mahā-bhāga</i>	<i>prāṇān me hṛdayāt trayī</i>
<i>vidyā prādurabhūt tasyā</i>	<i>aham āsam tri-vṛṇ makhaḥ</i>
<i>vipra-kṣatriya-ṣṭ-sūdrā</i>	<i>mukha-bāhūru-pāda-jāḥ</i>
<i>vairājāt puruṣāj jātā</i>	<i>ya ātmācāra-lakṣaṇāḥ</i>

“In the beginning, in Satya-yuga, there is only one social class, called *haṁsa*, to

which all human beings belong. In that age all people are unalloyed devotees of the Lord from birth, and thus learned scholars call this first age Kṛta-yuga, or the age in which all religious duties are perfectly fulfilled.

“O greatly fortunate one, at the beginning of Tretā-yuga Vedic knowledge appeared from My heart, which is the abode of the air of life, in three divisions—as Ṛg, Sāma, and Yajur. Then from that knowledge I appeared as threefold sacrifice. “In Tretā-yuga the four social orders were manifested from the universal form of the Personality of Godhead. The *brāhmaṇas* appeared from the Lord's face, the *kṣatriyas* from the Lord's arms, the *vaiśyas* from the Lord's thighs and the *śūdras* from the legs of that mighty form. Each social division was recognized by its particular duties and behavior.”

In the beginning there is only one social class called *hamsa*. Later, when Satya-yuga was finished and Tretā-yuga began, the four *varṇas* were divided according to qualifications and activities.

In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.5.2) it is stated:

*mukha-bāhūru-pādebhyaḥ puruṣasyāśramaiḥ saha
catvāro jajñire varṇā guṇair viprādayaḥ pṛthak*

“Each of the four social orders, headed by the *brāhmaṇas*, was born through different combinations of the modes of nature, from the face, arms, thighs and feet of the Supreme Lord in His universal form. Thus the four spiritual orders were also generated.”

In other words, the *brāhmaṇas* were born from the mouth of the universal form through the mode of goodness, the *kṣatriyas* were born from His arms through the mode of passion, the *vaiśyas* were born from His thighs through the modes of passion and ignorance, and the *śūdras* were born from His feet through the mode of ignorance.

In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.17.14) it is also said:

*grhāśramo jaghanato brahmacaryam hṛdo mama
vākṣaḥ-sthalād vane-vāsaḥ sannyāsaḥ śirasi sthitaḥ*

The *sannyāsīs* appeared from the head of the universal form, the *brahmacārīs* came from the heart, the *vānaprasthas* appeared from the chest, and the *grhasthas* appeared from the loins. In course of time, people deviated from the principles of *varṇāśrama* and began to ignore the qualifications. That is why the *varṇas* are presently ascertained only by seminal consideration. If the ascertainment of *varṇa* by qualification is completely discarded, however, and ascertainment only through seminal consideration is followed, then the *upanayana-saṁskāra*, or sacred thread ceremony, should be given along with the *jāta-saṁskāra*, or birth ceremony. But instead of this, a person's propensities should be examined, and if the mode of goodness is seen, then he should be awarded the sacred thread and be allowed to study the *Vedas*. The *upanayana-saṁskāra* must be awarded in the early stage of one's life. After undergoing this *saṁskāra* one is allowed to study the *Vedas* and perform other rituals. But if one wants to become a *brāhmaṇa* at the end of one's life, there are many Vedic mantras that oppose this. If one does not begin to study the *Vedas* at the proper time, one will not have the fortune of becoming competent. If one spends most of his life uselessly as a *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*, or *śūdra*, then his spiritual progress is hindered. That is why persons like Viśvāmitra and Vītahavya had to struggle hard to become *brāhmaṇas*. Many times *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*,

and *śūdra* children were awarded the *upanayana-saṁskāra* and accepted as *brāhmaṇas* after their propensity or nature was examined by an *ācārya*. Those who failed to exhibit higher propensities at the proper time were obliged to accept a *varṇa* according to their nature. The *Mahābhārata*, the *Hari-vamśa*, the eighteen *Purāṇas*, and other ancient histories of India are evidence of this fact. Whenever an *ācārya* was not able to determine a person's *varṇa*, he was considered as being of the same *varṇa* as his father. In the *Mahābhārata* it is mentioned that in the age of Kali there will be doubts about deciding a person's *varṇa* according to seminal consideration. The principle qualifications of *brāhmaṇas*, who are in the mode of goodness, are simplicity and truthfulness. But there are many opinions regarding seminal qualifications.

The time for examining a person's worldly inclination is between the ages of eight and twenty-two. According to worldly considerations, if a student's position remains undetermined through this period of examination, he is called a *vrātya*. This does not mean, however, that the spiritual inclinations of a person should be examined in the same way. The reason for this is that a person's inclination for spiritual life may arise by some good fortune at any time. Then he should no longer be considered a fallen *vrātya*, and if evidence of devotional service to Lord Viṣṇu is found in him, there is no harm in calling him a Brahman-realized spiritualist. Unqualified *vrātyas* are often awarded spiritual or *pañcarātri*ka initiation. The spiritual activities of a duly initiated *brāhmaṇa* are called performance of Vedic sacrifice. The Vedic initiation of a *vrātya* who has not first acquired the qualifications for brahminical initiation should not be accepted as authentic. Since it is not possible to properly execute the Vedic ritualistic ceremonies in this age of quarrel, Kali-yuga, those who have taken *sāvitrya* brahminical initiation should be known as *śūdra-kalpa*, as good as *śūdras*. Therefore, all *sampradāyas* agree that rather than considering how to enhance one's position, one should accept initiation according to the *pañcarātri*ka system and engage oneself in the activities enjoined in the *Vedas*. In this way the biased opinions of conflicting parties are reconciled through the combined help of the *Vedas* and *Pañcarātras*. During the Buddhist revolution in India, when it became impossible to carry out Vedic duties without deviation, such instructions were often accepted in order to reestablish the principles of *varṇāśrama*. When people's spiritual endeavors gradually diminished and society fell from the devotional service of Lord Viṣṇu, people began following a distorted system of *varṇāśrama*. There are two kinds of *varṇāśrama*—demoniac and divine. The system of *varṇāśrama* that is based on fruitive activities meant for material enjoyment that is followed by those who are averse to Lord Hari is called demoniac *varṇāśrama*, and the other is the *varṇāśrama* of the community of those who want to serve Hari. This has already been elaborately described. Both the seminal *brāhmaṇa* community and the initiated *brāhmaṇa* community can progress side-by-side towards spiritual life if they put aside their quarrels. But if they fall from their goal and become the servants of worldly lust, then they will not have the good fortune of becoming eternal Hari-janas. If one gives up spiritual practices to protect demoniac society and if one glorifies the system of materialistic *varṇāśrama*, it will certainly hamper one's eternal auspiciousness. Pseudo devotees should impartially consider what benefit can be achieved if one's spiritual life is covered by mundane selfishness. We will hereby refrain from publicly discussing their foolishness. If we

see that they are gradually and silently progressing toward the spiritual kingdom, then our happiness will increase.

The followers of *varṇāśrama* who are on the path of spiritual life under the guidance of the *paramahamsas* are not mad with the false pride of the temporary material world; therefore they can become transcendently situated. When they actually attain such an impartial platform, they will understand that worship with material desires is mundane and that there is no conflict between one's constitutional duties, in the form of love for Kṛṣṇa, and *daiva-varṇāśrama*. When a person is maddened to defy a Vaiṣṇava with his body and mind, it is to be understood that he is not situated in his constitutional position as spirit soul. Only Vaiṣṇavas are qualified to worship Lord Viṣṇu. The material body and mind cannot worship Viṣṇu through the medium of matter. The followers of demoniac *varṇāśrama* can never worship Viṣṇu. Their worship of Viṣṇu pricks Him like a pin. It is not possible to worship Viṣṇu without first worshiping the Vaiṣṇavas. Most persons who have studied the scriptures should know that before worshiping Viṣṇu one must worship the spiritual master and Gaṇeśa, who is a Vaiṣṇava and the destroyer of obstacles. According to the logic of half-hen, or *ardha-kukkuṭi*, there is no value in worshiping Viṣṇu without worshiping the Vaiṣṇavas.

Only a Vaiṣṇava is capable of giving others the right to worship Viṣṇu. Those who are envious of the Vaiṣṇavas can never give Viṣṇu mantras to others. A person who does not worship or who criticizes the spiritual master and the Vaiṣṇavas is not qualified to receive a Viṣṇu mantra. If a person is not qualified to own something, how can he give it to others? Therefore the scriptures declare that one cannot worship Viṣṇu with mantras that are received from a nondevotee. One should give up the association of such nondevotees and take initiation, in the form of transcendental knowledge, from a Vaiṣṇava spiritual master. Unless one gives up the bad association of persons who are averse to the Vaiṣṇavas, he achieves no benefit. Wise Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* like Śrīla Gaṅgā-nārāyaṇa Cakravartī and Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Bhaṭṭācārya took initiation from Vaiṣṇavas and thus established spiritual life as the highest goal in this world.

Learned persons who want to act piously in human life perform the sacrificial performance called *śrāddha* in order to show gratefulness to their forefathers and deliver them from ghostly life. Although this ceremony is taken seriously by the general, ungrateful human society, in spiritual life it is not practiced in the same way. All living entities are servants of Kṛṣṇa. When they forget that they are transcendental servants of the Lord, they are seen to traverse the field of activities through the endeavors of their bodies and minds. But this is not the eternal function of the pure soul. It is superficial and based on nothing more than material desires. The spiritual community serves their worshipable departed elders by faithfully offering them *śrī mahā-prasāda*. This is completely different from the fruitive method of offering *śrāddha*. The Vaiṣṇavas are completely unable to concur with the beliefs of the fruitive workers, because this would obstruct their spiritual progress. Simply because the Vaiṣṇavas live in the social shadow of the godless materialists, they should not deviate from their goal and forsake their spiritual life. The process of Vaiṣṇava *śrāddha* mentioned in *Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* should be followed by devotees in all respects.

The conceptions of purity and impurity and proper and improper codes of conduct are accepted by the *daiva* and *āśura varṇāśrama* systems in different ways. A

Vaiṣṇava does not subscribe to any activity that hinders his spiritual life. The worldly *smārtas* simply consider the purity and impurity of objects. Since they have no spiritual knowledge at all, whatever standards they establish may not necessarily be accepted by transcendentalists. It is not logical to try to place the *smārtas* and Vaiṣṇavas on equal level, because their behavior and activities are different. Though a *brahmacārī* is forbidden from sexual activities, in the *gr̥hasthas*' code of conduct there are various circumstances in which sexual activity is appropriate. Should *gr̥hasthas* therefore be condemned? Behavior in accordance with one's status is said to be virtuous, although the same cannot be accepted as proper for someone whose status is different. The behavior of a Vaiṣṇava or *paramahansa* is totally different from the behavior of a follower of *varṇāśrama*. Therefore attempts to consider their activities on an equal level are offensive. This *Vyavahāra-kāṇḍa* needs to be elaborately discussed, and since such discussion is not feasible at this time we are ending this comparative essay, waiting for the opportunity for further discussion.

om hariḥ.

Appendixes

(written by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda)

Ācārya-santāna

How to respect an *ācārya* and his offspring.

Those who are endowed with spiritual power and who properly follow the religious principles are called *ācāryas*. And those who serve Lord Hari following in the footsteps of the *ācāryas* are known as pure devotees under the shelter of the *ācāryas*. The Supreme Lord has said, “You should know Me as an *ācārya*, therefore never disrespect an *ācārya* in any way.” Just as a disciple is duty-bound to show respect and devotion to his spiritual master, he should show similar respect to the children, friends, and relatives of the spiritual master. How one should behave and respect the spiritual master's *santāna*, or children, is found in many places in the *Dharma-śāstras*. Considering the children of the *ācārya* as superior to themselves, like the *ācārya*, the pure devotees respect them accordingly. To show respect to the family of the *ācārya* is also proper etiquette and approved by the *śāstras*. (*Sajjana-toṣaṇī*, Vol. 19, Part 2)

The difference between the *parivāra* and the *santāna* of an *ācārya*.

The two principle servants of Śrī Mahāprabhu were Śrī Prabhu Nityānanda and Śrī Prabhu Advaita. Since Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrī Advaita Prabhu accepted the *gr̥hastha-āśrama*, Their seminal descendants are known as *ācārya-santāna*. Their surrendered servants and devotees in the disciplic succession are also known as Their *santāna*. In Bengal, the servants in the disciplic succession are called

parivāra, or family, and seminal descendants are called *santāna*. When one mentions the *vaṁśa*, or dynasty, of an *ācārya*, it refers to his seminal children as well as his disciples.

**Due to lack of renounced disciples,
the seminal offspring are unduly respected.**

Since there is an abundance of householders following the line of the *smārtas* in Bengal, there is a considerable lack of renounced persons in the disciplic line. That is why the seminal descendants, while attempting to impress or prove mastery over the uneducated householders, have caused great harm to the eternal religious principles. What to speak of this, even ordinary nondevotee householders are so mad about the *ācārya-santāna* that they consider giving mundane social respect to those sons is actually devotional service to Hari, and thus they often became averse to Hari. In many instances these seminal sons of the *ācāryas* award titles like “qualified devotee” to members of the uneducated community, while in fact making them averse to devotional service.

**The *ācārya-santāna*'s activities hostile
to devotional service and service to the six enemies.**

The seminal offspring of the *ācāryas* have sometimes acted foolishly, become averse to Lord Hari, indulged in accumulating excessive wealth and women, professionally recited scriptures like the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* for the sake of money, become professional story tellers, displayed expertise in dancing and voracious eating while conducting twenty-four hour *kīrtana*, imparted mantras in return for money and clothes, and in the process engaged in activities hostile to devotional service.

Just after the disappearance of Śrīman Mahāprabhu these misfortunes caused turmoil in the Vaiṣṇava families of the world and resulted in degradation. At that time, following in the footsteps of the eight Gosvāmīs of Vraja, *ācāryas* empowered by Śrī Mahāprabhu headed by Śrīnivāsa Ācārya Prabhu, Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, and Śyāmānanda Prabhu tried to keep the preaching of devotional service intact. Later, during the time of their descendants, the flow of pure devotional service was again covered. Again the *ācārya-santāna* became averse to Hari, which affected the flow of pure devotional service. This diverted the *ācārya-santāna* in various ways from their predecessors' line. If the children of the *ācāryas* lead a pious life and engage in devotional service, then the whole world will benefit from their behavior. The great disturbances that are often created by the six enemies such as lust, anger, and greed among the *ācārya-santāna* are not unknown to the pure devotees.

**Being the offspring of Lord Brahmā,
every living entity is an *ācārya-santāna*.**

Brahmā, the original spiritual master, is the foremost *ācārya*. From him the four *varṇas* and other living entities have taken birth. According to the different occupations, various *varṇas* and castes were created among the descendants. Actually all living entities are *santāna* of the original *ācārya*, Lord Brahmā. Śrī Gaurasundara and His associates especially tried to keep the *ācārya-santāna*'s service attitude intact, just like their fathers.

**The degradation of the *ācārya-santāna*
is due to their karma.**

As a result of their previous karma, the offspring of the *ācārya* often lack the qualities of a real *ācārya*. Ignorance, foolishness, and nondevotional activities have in some places influenced the *ācārya-santāna* and their followers to become averse to Lord Hari. In other places, hypocrisy has created confusion among the *ācārya-santāna* and perversity among their followers. Due to artificiality and hypocrisy some *ācārya-santāna* became overwhelmed by material sense objects and absorbed in sense gratification while accumulating money. Yet in other places they have propagated ignorance as an ornament of devotional service. The result has been that many nondevotees are considering that worship of Hari is a kind of hypocrisy, and thus the preaching of pure devotional service has been halted.

Instruction to the *ācārya-santāna*.

All living entities created by the Supreme Lord are offspring of the *ācārya*. Our humble request at their lotus feet is that they should learn the foremost teaching of Śrī Gaurasundara: “Being nonduplicitous and lower than the straw, more tolerant than a tree, respectful to everyone while thinking oneself most fallen, one should always chant the names of Kṛṣṇa.” Then foolish persons like us will realize the quality of an *ācārya* among those living entities who are *ācārya-santāna*, cross the insurmountable ocean of material existence, and constantly engage in the service of Hari. (*Sajjana-toṣaṇī*, Vol.19, Part 2)

Vaiṣṇava-vamśa

***Kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs* are materialistic Vaiṣṇavas.**

In this material world we find that the Vaiṣṇavas are situated in three different levels. Actually all animate objects are servants of Kṛṣṇa. Ordinary people as well as *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī* and *madhyama-adhikārī* Vaiṣṇavas consider those who do not exhibit any symptoms of inclination towards Kṛṣṇa as averse to Hari. But although they are nondevotees, they are nevertheless servants of Lord Viṣṇu. Lord Vāsudeva is situated in everyone's heart. If Lord Viṣṇu were not present in every higher or lower object of this material world, then nothing could exist.

We can see that servants of Viṣṇu who are on the platform of *kaniṣṭha-adhikāra* have started worshiping the Deity of Lord Viṣṇu with faith but have not yet realized themselves. That is why the Vaiṣṇavas on the *kaniṣṭha-adhikāra* platform are glorified by *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* as materialistic rather than transcendental.

The gradual advancement of *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs*.

The neophytes, while serving the Supreme Lord with great faith, attain the mercy of the Lord. Then they get the opportunity to gradually give up their material conceptions. At that time, the desire for sense enjoyment, the performance of pious activities, and even the position of a mundane impersonalist who searches after Brahman appear insignificant to these *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī* Vaiṣṇavas. They then became detached from material objects. Then their pride born of *varṇa* and wealth as well as their material sense gratification begin to diminish. While cultivating spiritual life, the materialistic Vaiṣṇavas change their platform just as a leech

changes its color.

The Madhyama-adhikāra of Vaiṣṇava.

We can see that due to their cultivation of spiritual life, the *madhyama-adhikārīs* see the same Deity form as the *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs*, yet with more mature spiritual vision. On that platform they do not consider the Deity as made of material elements. They then experience contact with the spiritual entity in their own existence and become qualified to discriminate between the different positions of the different devotees. Being situated on such a platform, they love all living entities, make friendship with those who are inclined towards Kṛṣṇa, benefit others by preaching devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, and give up the association of persons averse to the Lord. At this juncture they face various obstacles. Sometimes they are subdued by self-worshipping Māyāvādīs, sometimes they are condemned by foolish pious people, and sometimes they are attacked by unregulated persons who are simply absorbed in eating and drinking.

The gradual advancement of the *madhyama-adhikārīs*.

The *madhyama-adhikārīs* gladly tolerate these disturbances and by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa never deviate from the service of Hari. Since the *madhyama-adhikārī's* position is more fixed than the neophytes, who are prone to fall down, they cannot be threatened by persons who averse to Hari. The *madhyama-adhikārīs* realize that the Lord is situated in their hearts. As *caitya-guru* in the heart of the devotees, Lord Kṛṣṇacandra attracts them, considering them His own. By the mercy of Hari, the spiritual master, and the Vaiṣṇavas, the *madhyama-adhikārīs* attain complete transcendental realization. In ordinary language this is called self-realization.

The advanced platform of Vaiṣṇava.

The position known by *jñānīs* as *jīvan-mukta*, or liberated even in this life, is known in the language of pure Vaiṣṇavas as self-realization, or being situated in the transcendental position. In that state one has no engagement other than service to Kṛṣṇa. Those who quarrel over the ingredients of service cannot imagine the advanced position. Those who consider the clay pot of Śrī Śrīmad Viṣṇupāda Gaurakiśora dāsa Bābājī, his eating of uncooked foodstuffs, his intense renunciation, and his encouragement to the *sahajiyās* as ingredients for the service of Hari, and thus become absorbed in them, will simply be pulling the skin of the fruit while rejecting the pulp. Those who are maddened by material objects rather than spiritual, will never be able to understand the activities of the *mahā-bhāgavatas*, or exalted devotees. As long as one considers the ingredients of service equal to those fit for one's own material enjoyment, he can never have spiritual realization.

Vaiṣṇava-vamśa and its reversion.

We find *vamśas*, or dynasties, of the above-mentioned three types of Vaiṣṇavas in this world. *Vamśa* does not only refer to the seminal descendants. The dynasties in this world are produced by licit association with woman according to the principles of *varṇāśrama*. But we cannot say that this is the only pure, unadulterated, ongoing process. By the combination of father and mother the child is born. All men are capable of begetting various offspring in the wombs of their

respective wives. Therefore unadulterated fatherhood cannot be imposed on the sons of the gross seminal dynasties.

Seminal birth and duties towards parents.

The parents are the principle servants of their sons. They serve their child from his birth by various direct and indirect activities of their body, mind, and speech. In order to repay these debts, the grateful sons must serve their parents as their primary duty. Yet the son does not become fit to serve his parents immediately after his birth. After a long time, when he grows up and becomes matured, then his service attitude is awakened. Then as a successor of his parents he realizes his duty to serve his parents. This is the seminal dynasty, wherein the experiences exhibited by the parents become prominent in the heart.

Second birth through initiation and duty towards the *ācārya*.

We know that apart from seminal birth, a living entity takes another birth in the family of an *ācārya*. When a living entity attains his second birth, he becomes freed from the condemnation of taking only one birth. The *ācārya* and *Gāyatrī* give him a second birth, called *sāvitrā*. At that time, having received his second birth in the family of an *ācārya*, he can more properly understand his duties as a servant. The parents serve their child as long as he remains at home. As soon as his knowledge is developed, he is first sent to *gurukula*. Then while staying in *gurukula* he understands his duties towards his parents. The *ācārya*, however, does not become a servant of the child like his parents. The twice-born child receives more opportunity to serve the *ācārya*. The twice-born, who is a servant of the *ācārya*, considers the home of the *ācārya* as his own and takes responsibility to serve the *ācārya* in various ways.

The two types of Vedic instructions.

The twice-born student receives knowledge of the *Vedas* and Vedic literatures from his *ācārya*. The Vedic literatures recommend two kinds of instructions. One is to adjust with the material nature while remaining in this world. And the other is to be educated in eternal spiritual subject matters.

If the *ācārya* is a worshiper of temporary religious principles, then he will instruct his disciples about temporary worship, such as karma or *jñāna*. But if the *ācārya* is a devotee instead of a *smārta*, then he will teach the most confidential subject matters of the *Vedas*. Though he receives Vedic instructions from the *ācārya*, a disciple who has a taste for material objects and is thus absorbed in mundane conceptions considers materialistic household duties as the purpose of human life. But if the *ācārya* is a devotee, then he teaches the ripened fruit of the Vedic tree, *bhāgavata-dharma*, from the Vedic literature and helps living entities attain eternal life. He also teaches them the difference between eternal and temporary life. Being under the control of insignificant greed or material enjoyment, a student returns home after completing his formalities with the *ācārya* simply to engage in fruitive activities. One who considers material assets very insignificant and useless for spiritual life and is attracted towards spiritual life accepts *brhad-vrata* (celibacy) rather than returning home, or he returns home and accepts spiritual initiation.

Initiation and duty towards the spiritual master.

The spiritual *ācārya* is known as guru. He awards third birth to the living entities by giving them initiation, in the form of imparting transcendental knowledge. In this third birth a person engages in spiritual cultivation and attains freedom from material conceptions. We have already discussed that a *vaṁśa* does not expand only through *śaukra-janma*, or seminal birth, rather it also expands through *sāvitra* and *daikṣa janmas*, or Vedic and spiritual initiations.

The differences in *śaukra-janma* from *sāvitra* and *daikṣa janmas*.

Although residing with an *ācārya* or a transcendental guru is different from extending the seminal line, due to the similarity in succession all three lines are called *vaṁśas*, or dynasties. In seminal birth, the son has a limited service attitude towards his father, but among those who have taken *sāvitra* or *daikṣa-janma*, Vedic initiation or spiritual initiation, the sense of serving their *ācārya* or spiritual master respectively is greater. On the path of devotional service, the successors are appreciated according to their degree of service. Just as the son of a doctor does not necessarily inherit his father's medical knowledge, rather his knowledge depends on his personal experience in that field, similarly being the (seminal) son of a Vaiṣṇava guru does not in itself qualify one as an *ācārya* or spiritual master. Nor is it found in any *śāstra* or spiritual practices that spiritual authority should be entrusted only on the *śaukra-vaṁśa*, or seminal dynasty. Only some duplicitous, selfish, nondevotee householders advertise this opinion.

The *vaṁśas* of *sannyāsī* gurus of authorized *sampradāyas* are confined to their disciplic succession. It is written in the *Padma Purāṇa* that mantras received from unauthorized disciplic lines do not produce any result.

The evil intentions of deceitful *sampradāyas*.

Many new philosophies have been manufactured in order to cheat foolish people, and ordinary selfish people who are maddened with material pride cannot ascertain the truth by defeating these philosophies. Thus pseudo *sampradāyas* spread their net to cover the truth. Falling in their trap, many unfortunate people are deviated from the truth and become entangled in the net of *anarthas* rather than progress in spiritual life. If the son of a doctor treats people without mastering medical knowledge, if the son of a train driver begins to drive trains without sufficient knowledge about the mechanism of the engine, or if the son of an expert swimmer who is unable to swim like his father takes others in the deep water to teach them swimming, one can easily imagine the venomous results they will produce.

The Conclusion.

We may go on bragging that we are born in the seminal dynasty of a Vaiṣṇava and we may exhibit lifeless limbs of devotional service, but unless we have firm faith in the service of Hari we will simply cheat ourselves and become enemies of society. Acyuta-gotra is never a *śaukra-gotra*, or seminal family, therefore Vaiṣṇava *vaṁśa* does not refer only to the seminal dynasty. The spiritual Vaiṣṇavas who belong to the Acyuta-gotra, or family of Kṛṣṇa, entrust their respective authority only to

their most confidential servants. The unqualified descendants can never claim to be successors just because they were born in that family. Even if they achieve such a position, they are unable to protect it. These facts are similarly applicable to the dynasties of Lord Viṣṇu as well. Specifically, the Lord and His devotees appear in different dynasties at different times, and there are no obstacles for nondevotees and demons to take birth in such families. The son of Lord Viṣṇu is not Lord Viṣṇu, but a Vaiṣṇava. So from the third generation there is no difference between the descendants of Viṣṇu and the descendants of the Vaiṣṇavas. (*Sajjana-toṣaṇī*, Vol. 19, Part 7/8)

Smārta Raghunandana. (Preface)

Raghunandana, the principle *smārta* of Bengal.

Many children, old people, and women of the Hindu Āryan community of Bengal have heard the name of Raghunandana. Those who have not heard will naturally be curious to know who he is. Raghunandana's identification in brief is that he is the principle *smārta* of Bengal.

The Absolute Truth appears through the descending process.

Smārta refers to those who know the *smṛtis*; therefore it is natural to inquire what is a *smṛti*. Knowledge of the Supreme Truth was manifested by the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha in the heart of Brahmā through the descending process. Śrī Nārada received this knowledge from Lord Brahmā and then imparted it to Vyāsadeva. Brahmā spoke about the Absolute Truth to Nārada; Nārada then spoke to Vyāsadeva. From Vyāsa, the Absolute Truth has been handed down through disciple succession in the authorized *sampradāyas*.

The Absolute Truth is obstructed through the ascending process of the seminal line.

From Brahmā, the sages were born through seminal succession. Rather than descending through disciplic succession like the path of devotees, the path of the sages, being induced by material knowledge, has diverted into the ascending process. The sages and the three *varṇas* who are subordinate to the sages consider their material knowledge beneficial for themselves, and with the support of direct perception and hypothesis, they obstruct the descending process of disciplic succession. Those who traverse the descending process are qualified to reach the Absolute Truth. But since those who traverse the ascending process have accepted the external ascending path to reach the undisputed destination, they have become eager to minimize the glories of the Absolute Truth. As a result, even though they proudly advertise their faith in the *Vedas*, their actual intention is to disregard the *Vedas*. This is clearly understood.

**Differences of opinion occur only in
the ascending process; there are no differences
of opinion in the descending process, rather
there is complete harmony in diversity.**

Whenever the sages gave explanations on the *Vedas* that were contrary to the actual purport of the *Vedas*, differences in their respective realizations arose. On the ascending path, one sage attacks another sage and tries to establish his own opinion. In the descending path, however, there is no such outrage or drawback. The varieties that are perceived are all used in the service of the nondual Personality of Godhead; one does not become puffed-up or averse to Hari.

**Prediction about persons who traverse
the ascending path and are faithless
to the words of the spiritual master.**

The words from the mouth of a bona fide spiritual master are not independent of the *śāstra*. They are completely nourished by and favorable to the *śāstra*. The favorable ascending path that is sometimes accepted to understand the Absolute Truth is simply subservient to the descending process. But whenever the descending path is neglected, the *advaya-jñāna*, or knowledge of the nondual substance, is more or less subdued. Wherever respect for the spiritual master has been diminished, the ascending process, in the form of disobeying the spiritual master, has simply created a perverted mentality of *vivarta-vāda*, or the Māyāvāda theory of illusion, filled with pride and nourished by the four defects like committing mistakes and being illusioned. This diseased mentality eventually turns into a mine of licentiousness.

**Persons who disregard the words
of the spiritual master are unable to comprehend
the Vedic instructions.**

When persons who disregard the spiritual master try to understand the Vedic literatures through their evil attempts, differences of opinion automatically arise in their understanding. But if the sages give up their pride of seminal birth and become fixed in real knowledge by following the descending path, then their recitation of songs from the *Sāma Veda* will be nondifferent from that of the *Rg Veda*. Those who are proud of seminal birth and whose bodily conception of life is very prominent are not qualified to hear the instructions of the spiritual master. When the sages subdue their material pride and live in a *gurukula* to study the *Vedas*, they are able to comprehend the hearing and studying of the *Vedas*. Comprehension of the heard subject matters is called *smṛti*, in other words, to comprehend the subject matter heard in the *gurukula* through the descending process and act accordingly is execution of the *smṛtis*.

**The *smṛtis* of Raghunandana, who follows
the ascending process, are harmful to the devotees.**

The rules and regulations our Raghunandana Bhaṭṭācārya has preached as *smṛtis* for the benefit of the persons traversing the ascending path are not acceptable to the devotees. The worldly, or social, *smṛtis* may please and bring auspiciousness to people, but they misguide those who traverse the descending path from their goal and cause their downfall. While following the ascending path and its code of conduct, when the *smārtas*, who are expert in *smṛti* literature, create communities to place impediments on the path of spiritual progress, then devotees consider their attempts as a hindrance to spiritual life.

**The difference between *smṛtis* aiming at material
enjoyment and those aiming at service to the Lord.**

The *smṛtis* of the spiritualists and those of the *karmīs* are not the same. The *smārtas* and the devotees see the *smṛtis*, or conceptions of the *Vedas*, on various levels. The spiritualists say:

laukikī vaidikī vāpi yā kriyā kriyate mune
hari-sevānukūlaiva sā kāryā bhaktim icchatā

This means that whatever a traveler on the path of *bhakti* does is meant for pleasing Lord Hari. And whatever fruitive activities, mental speculation, and sense enjoyment that nondevotee communities devoid of devotion to Hari engage in are simply proof of their enjoying spirit in aversion to Hari. Those who have been permanently qualified in the kingdom of aversion to the Lord are alone incapable of attaching importance to the service of Lord Hari, through worldly or Vedic performances. Such *smārtas* claim a difference of opinion with the travelers on the path of *bhakti*. There is a gulf of difference between ordinary *smṛtis* and spiritual *smṛtis*.

**The spiritual *smṛtis* and worldly *smṛtis* can never be
in agreement, they are eternally different.**

From the gross material point of view, a strong desire may arise to find a compromise between them; but if an intelligent person carefully considers, he will understand that such an endeavor will create obstacles in worshiping the nondual Personality of Godhead. Generally material knowledge is polluted with four defects—imperfect senses, the propensity for cheating, certainty of committing mistakes, and certainty of being illusioned. The Vedic literatures, however, are beyond these defects. The *smṛtis* that are subordinate to the *Vedas* are also supposed to be beyond defect. The ordinary materialistic conception is situated in the living entities' field of fruitive activities and awards them a suitable result. The field of the devotees, however, is not the field of fruitive activities that enhances one's material enjoyment. Therefore the Vedic knowledge, or purport of the *Vedas*, that is heard from the mouth of the spiritual master is not same as the worldly *smṛtis*. Many *smārtas*, who oppose each other, have taken birth in different places at different times. Until a living entity's spiritual perception is awakened, he considers the *smārtas*, who are travelers on the ascending path, as followers of Vedic literatures who are either worldly or devoid of service to Hari; but when he leaves behind the activities at different times and places of *smārtas* whose attempts are always unfavorable for devotional service, he continually follows the spiritual *smṛtis* in the kingdom of devotional service.

**The modern so-called Vaiṣṇavas under
the subordination of Raghunandana are actually against the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.**

Through his own genius our Bengali Raghunandana has accumulated certain *smṛtis* and preached them in various places of Bengal. At present the society of aversion to the service of Hari is being run under the subordination of those teachings. Moreover, many superficial devotees follow Raghunandana's *smṛtis*, which are against Vaiṣṇava principles, and thus uproot their spiritual propensities.

Such people desire various forms of material enjoyment in the guise of householders and consider that following *smārta* Raghunandana Bhaṭṭācārya is particular limb of worshiping Hari. Though this spiritual community identifies itself as Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava, members have in no way tried to safeguard the prestige of *Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, which was compiled under the order of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. Whenever they got an opportunity to follow the *smārta* doctrine, which is opposed to the teachings of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, they have readily accepted it. In this way they are accumulating Vaiṣṇava *aparādhās*, totally uprooting the eternal truth, and permanently obstructing the path of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa.

Raghunandana's oppression towards the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.

Though the position of Raghunandana is very high in the Hindu society of Bengal, in the vision of the devotees such a high position is also situated on the material platform. The harm caused by Raghunandana and his *smārta* followers in different parts of Bengal at different times is clearly manifested at present in every ritualistic performance. The devotees, however, cannot commit suicide by becoming attracted to the material respect and prestige of the *smārtas*.

Warning to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.

Therefore the devotees are humbly presenting these topics to the Hindu communities of Bengal and especially to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. The hearts of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas are certainly shaken by seeing the *smārtas* disturb and harass their desired goal of worship. The Vaiṣṇavas will gradually understand that the pure Vaiṣṇava dharma preached by Śrī Gaurasundara is bound by the *smārtas'* ropes, which increase one's aversion to the Lord. O Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas! Do not relinquish the cultivation of spiritual life, thinking that you will transgress *smārta* Raghunandana. Be familiar with Raghunandana and take leave of him forever. (*Sajjana-toṣaṇī*, Vol. 24, Part 5/6)

Smārta and Vaiṣṇava

Mundane fruitive *smṛtis* are casual—their results—the sense enjoyers are worldly *smārtas*.

When a living entity considers his material body and mind as his self and thus engages in various fruitive activities with a desire to enjoy their fruits, then he is called a *smārta*. The rules and regulations of the *smṛtis* have been composed to regulate those who are not surrendered to the Lord or His devotees but are simply engaged for their own bodily comforts. The rigid instructions of the *smṛtis* are meant to minimize the sinful propensities of those who always speak lies, cheat others, behave improperly, hanker after others possessions, and commit violence to achieve their self-interest. Therefore the injunctions of the *smṛtis* are not eternal, but simply casual, in other words, they have been created for some specific purpose. But the spiritual activities meant for the pleasure of the Lord are eternal, because in such activities the enjoyer is the Supreme Lord, the activities are performed to satisfy Him, and they will eternally do so. Among the twenty-eight

subjects dealt with by *smārta* Raghunandana, subjects such as *dāyabhāga* (inheritance), *saṁskāra* (purificatory processes), *śuddhīnirṇaya* (ascertainment of purity), *prāyaścitta* (atonement), and *śrāddha* (offering oblations with *prasāda*) are meant for human beings who desire to live one hundred years, and the enjoyers in this case are also those same human beings. There is no mention about the science of self-realization. His mention of worshiping Durgā, observing Ekādaśī, and sacrificing oxen are meant for material enjoyment or attaining liberation. Therefore they are casual.

The devotees follow the primary rule and prohibition.

The Vaiṣṇavas who are fully surrendered to the Lord do not engage in casual activities. They know that the Supreme Lord is the only enjoyer of everything and thus they engage in devotional service to please Him. They know that:

<i>smartavyaḥ satataṁ viṣṇur</i>	<i>vismartavyo na jātucit</i>
<i>sarve vidhi-niṣedhāḥ syur</i>	<i>etayor eva kinkarāḥ</i>

Lord Viṣṇu is to be remembered always—this is the only rule, and never forget Viṣṇu—this is the only prohibition. All other rules and prohibitions are based on this primary rule and this primary prohibition. That which by following the Lord is always remembered is a rule, and that which by following the Lord is never forgotten is a prohibition. (from *Padma Purāṇa* quoted in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*)

The Vaiṣṇavas serve the Lord with love and devotion.

The Vaiṣṇavas are fully surrendered souls, therefore all their activities are meant to satisfy the Lord. The Vaiṣṇavas are nonenvious and realistic, because they have reestablished their relationship with the Lord. They do not wish to be influential in this world or subdue others; nor do they desire any fame through the performance of various sacrifices, meditation, chanting mantras, undergoing austerities, performing funeral rites, offering oblations, travelling to the holy places, or sacrificing animals in the worship of Durgā; nor are they interested in attaining the heavenly planets. Furthermore, they do not desire to enjoy the pleasure of liberation by attaining freedom from the clutches of birth and death. If they can serve their worshipable Lord, they do not mind to take millions of births or even reside in hell. This is their only prayer. Pleasing the Lord is their goal of life.

Exhibition of the abominable mundane considerations of the materialists who are bewildered by the illusory energy.

It is found in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* that in ancient times there was a debate between the Hari-janas and Prakṛti-janas over Ajāmila. In this connection, Yamarāja instructed the Prakṛti-janas (the Yamadūtas) as follows: “What to speak to others, even great personalities like Jaimini and Manu, who have fruitive mentalities, could not properly realize the characteristics of the Hari-janas. Because their intelligence has been contaminated by the flowery language of the *Vedas*, their power of discrimination has been overwhelmed by *Māyā*. Therefore they glorify the elaborate and opulent ritualistic ceremonies of the *smṛtis*. Because they identify their bodies as their self, according to the logic *kāmukāḥ paśyanti kāmīnī-mayam*

jagat, or “a very lusty man sees women everywhere,” they even find various faults with the devotional endeavors of the Vaiṣṇavas; they consider the water that has washed the feet of the Vaiṣṇavas as ordinary water; and they even consider that if Lord Nārāyaṇa (*śālagrāma*) is touched by a *śūdra* He should be purified by five purificatory ingredients. In other words, they think that even the Lord is subjected to contamination and can be purified by something like cow dung. They consider that the Vaiṣṇavas belong to a particular caste, they consider *mahā-prasāda* as ordinary rice and dal that can be contaminated by the touch, and they consider that if they eat or offer foodstuffs cooked by their disciples they will lose their caste. They eat *ātapa* rice that has not been precooked, takes bath three times a day, walk abnormally on the road in order to avoid stepping on the ants, wear silk *dhotīs*, consider that the Vaiṣṇavas are forced to enjoy the fruits of their karma, consider that if one does not properly follow the demoniac *varṇāśrama* system then he will have to face the consequences, consider that religious principles are subordinate to social conventions, and glorify their godless society. Moreover, they consider that all of these activities are devotional service to the Lord.

**A surrendered soul is freed from sinful reactions;
activities performed with a desire to please the Lord are helpful for achieving
pure devotional service.**

The Lord has personally stated in *Śrī Bhagavad-gītā*, which is the crest jewel of all conclusion, as follows:

*sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
aham tvām sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*

“Give up all varieties of *varṇas* and *āśramas* and take shelter of Me. I will deliver you from all sinful reactions that will be result from not following those activities prescribed for those *varṇas* and *āśramas*.”

He also states in the Third Chapter as follows:

*yajña-śiṣṭāśinaḥ santo mucyante sarva-kilbiṣaiḥ
bhuñjate te tv aghaṁ pāpā ye pacanty ātma-kāraṇāt*

“Those devotees who accept the remnants of the Lord are freed from sinful reactions born from fruitive activities like the five different kinds of *yajña* (*pañca-sūnā*). And those who claim to be the enjoyers and accumulate ingredients for their own enjoyment, verily eat only sin.”

He further states in *Śrī Gita* as follows:

yajñārthāt karmaṇo 'nyatra loko 'yaṁ karma-bandhanaḥ

“Activities must be performed for Yajña, or the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu, otherwise they become the cause of bondage.” Activities performed for Viṣṇu are devotional service. They can gradually turn into pure devotional service.

It is mentioned in *Nārada-pañcarātra* as follows:

*surarṣe vihitā śāstre harimuddiśya yā kriyā
saiva bhaktir iti proktā tayā bhaktiḥ parā bhavet*

“O sage amongst the demigods, Nārada, those activities prescribed in the revealed scriptures for satisfying the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Hari, are called the regulative principles of *bhakti*, (*sādhana-bhakti*), by practicing which one may

attain the highest *bhakti* (*prema*)."

laukikī vaidikī vāpi yā kriyā kriyate mune
hari-sevānukūlaiva sā kāryā bhaktim icchatā

"One should perform only those activities—either worldly or prescribed by Vedic rules and regulations—which are favorable for the cultivation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness." Therefore all the activities performed by the devotees for the satisfaction of the Lord do not yield any sinful reactions and they help one in attaining pure devotional service. And since the activities performed by the nondevotee *smārtas* are meant for their own enjoyment, they are simply sinful. Even the activities that are pious according to the *smārtas* are also not totally free from sin. For example, being vegetarian is a pious activity. But when the fruitive workers eat vegetarian food, they also commit violence to living entities. Because fruits and roots are also living entities, if one cuts and eats them he is certainly sinful due to the act of killing. But when a surrendered devotee offers some fruits, roots, or water to Hari with devotion and according to the instructions of the *śāstras*, the Lord gladly accepts them. And when the devotees eat His transcendental remnants, no sinful reaction can touch them.

**Without worshiping the Lord even
the followers of *varṇāśrama* system cannot
be freed from sinful reactions.**

Statements from the Eleventh Canto of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* are translated by Śrīla Kavirāja Gosvāmī Prabhu in His *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* as follows:

cāri varṇāśramī yadi kṛṣṇa nāhi bhaje
svakarma karite se raurave paḍi' maje

"The followers of the *varṇāśrama* institution accept the regulative principles of the four social orders [*brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* and *śūdra*] and four spiritual orders [*brahmacarya*, *gṛhastha*, *vānaprastha* and *sannyāsa*]. However, if one carries out the regulative principles of these orders but does not render transcendental service to Kṛṣṇa, he falls into the hellish condition of material life." The reason for this is that other than devotional service all other endeavors are meant for material enjoyment and are therefore sinful. Only devotional service to the Lord is totally freed from sins.

**In the service of the Lord,
irreligiosity becomes religious.**

The Supreme Lord has said:

man nimittam kṛtam pāpam api dharmāya kalpate
mām anādṛtya dharmo 'pi pāpam syān mat prabhāvataḥ

"Committing sins for Me is also considered pious. But if one neglects Me and engages in religious activities, then by My influence these actions turn into sins." (This verse is from *Padma Purāṇa* quoted in *Bhakti-sandarbhā*) We will herein cite one example of the behavior of a great personality who was a predecessor *ācārya* in the Rāmānuja-sampradāya. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has mentioned the following incident in his commentary on *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. Long ago there was a devotee of Viṣṇu named Tirumaṅgai in South India. From his childhood he traveled to

various holy places in order to serve the Lord. In the course of his travels four persons with mystic perfections became his disciples. The name of his first disciple was Tarka-cūḍāmaṇi, his second disciple was Dvāra-unmocaka, his third disciple was known as Chāyāgraha, meaning whoever was touched by his shadow became immobile, and the name of his fourth disciple was Jaloparicara, meaning he could walk on water. While travelling with these four disciples, Tirumaṅgai once came to the temple of Śrī Raṅganātha. He saw that the temple was almost falling apart and that the very narrow courtyard was filled with leather shoes. The whole temple was surrounded by bushes. Due to the fear of tigers and jackals, the servants came once a day to worship Śrī Raṅganātha. Seeing this, Tirumaṅgai Ālvār became simultaneously distressed and angry. He began to think, “The materialists are living in gorgeous palaces, surrounded by women and engaged in various lusty affairs, and the Lord of the universe, the king of kings, the life and soul of everyone, is kept in a broken temple with dire negligence. The demons are plundering the wealth of Kṛṣṇa.” But Tirumaṅgai was himself penniless, so he could not decide what to do.

Eventually he and his four disciples began to visit rich people to beg alms. But being proud of their wealth, the rich people rather than giving him charity addressed him as a thief and turned him away. Some of them taunted him saying, “What is the need of money for a sadhu?” But Tirumaṅgai did not budge from his resolve. When he saw that the rich people were plundering the Lord's wealth and enjoying, he resolved to get the Lord's wealth back from the rich thieves and utilize it in the service of the Lord.

Tirumaṅgai and his four disciples became a gang of robbers. His first disciple, Tarka-cūḍāmaṇi, would entangle the materialists in the net of argument, his second disciple, Dvāra-unmocaka, would then open the door of the treasury house, his third disciple, Chāyāgraha, then made everyone motionless, and his fourth disciple, Jaloparicara, entered the palaces that were surrounded by deep moats and plundered all the wealth.

Thereafter, when sufficient wealth was accumulated, Tirumaṅgai brought many expert artists from various provinces and built a beautiful seven-story temple. But Tirumaṅgai himself cooked once a day, and after offering to the Lord he ate the remnants. He was fully surrendered and engaged in the service of the Lord with all his senses. In this way he engaged his disciples in the service of the Lord. He was a self-controlled Gosvāmī.

Actual examples of serving the spiritual master, serving the Lord, and being humbler than the grass according to the considerations of the devotees or Hari-janas.

In the vision of a *smārta*, or moralist, the above-mentioned activities of Tirumaṅgai Ālvār are certainly acts of robbery. Tirumaṅgai personally became a leader of thieves and inspired his disciples to perform such activities for the purpose of serving the Lord. In this activity, however, he had no desire at all for personal enjoyment or fame. He realized that all wealth belongs to Nārāyaṇa, the husband of Lakṣmī. Rich people are enjoying wealth meant for the Lord's service only due to illusion. Therefore they are actually the plunderers. So when the Lord's wealth could not be recovered through proper channels, then it should be recovered by any means. According to the Hari-janas, or devotees, this plundering act of

Tirumaṅgai is devotional service and being humbler than straw in the street. Just as the burning of Lanka by Hanumān is actually devotional service, service to the spiritual master, and being humbler than the grass. The reason is that in these activities there is no tinge of material enjoyment or liberation. And those activities which aim at material enjoyment and liberation, though considered auspicious, are actually impious. The reason is that they were not solely performed for the pleasure of the Lord. Therefore *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (3.23.52) gives the following instruction:

*neha yat karma dharmāya na virāgāya kalpate
na tīrtha-pada-sevāyai jīvaṇn api mṛto hi saḥ*

“Anyone whose work is not meant to elevate him to religious life, anyone whose religious ritualistic performances do not raise him to renunciation, and anyone situated in renunciation that does not lead him to devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, must be considered dead, although he is breathing.” (Weekly *Gauḍīya*, Vol. 2)

Vaiṣṇava Smṛti

**Both *karmīs* and *jñānīs* are materialists,
whereas the devotees are spiritualists.**

The particular *śāstras* by which the Indian Āryans conduct their ordinary dealings are generally known as *smṛti-śāstras*. The fruitive workers consider that by following certain rules and regulations their religiosity will be protected. But the mental speculators who desire liberation do not accept those rules and regulations. Rather, the *jñānīs*, according to their taste, become indifferent to material enjoyment and take to the path of renunciation, considering those injunctions as the only appropriate path for themselves. That is why expert fruitive workers call themselves materialists, and the renounced impersonalists identify themselves as spiritualists. But knowing the *jñānīs'* desire for enjoying the fruits of their activities, the devotees, who are transcendental to karma and *jñāna*, consider both *karmīs* and *jñānīs* as materialists and address the *śānta* Vaiṣṇavas as spiritualists. All actions performed with a desire for enjoying the results, up to liberation, are under the category of fruitive activities. Therefore they are simply mundane endeavors for one's self-interest.

**The *smṛti* regulations of
the transcendental devotees are not the same
as those of the materialists like the *karmīs* and *jñānīs*.**

All the endeavors of the devotees are meant for Kṛṣṇa. Since the devotees do not have material desires like the inferior *karmīs* and *jñānīs*, their endeavors are not like those of the *karmīs* and *jñānīs*. The injunctions of the *smṛtis* meant for regulating the materialists are not intended for the spiritualists. So we can say that there are differences between the regulative principles of the nondevotees and those of the devotees. The materialists, who want to enjoy the fruits of their karma and the devotees whose material desires are burnt to ashes are never on the same platform. The regulations of the nondevotees are meant for their own benefit, whereas the regulations of the devotees are meant for serving Kṛṣṇa. The purpose

of the former is to achieve the results of their mundane realizations, and the later is to serve the transcendental Lord.

The Vaiṣṇavas accept the injunctions of *Hārīta-smṛti* and those supported by the *Purāṇas*.

Among the twenty *Dharma-śāstras*, the injunctions of *Hārīta* are applicable to the Vaiṣṇavas. Apart from the twenty *Dharma-śāstras*, the regulations of the *Purāṇas* are also accepted by the *smārtas*. The Vaiṣṇavas also accept necessary injunctions from the *Purāṇas* and *Vedas*. In this country and abroad some ordinary *smārtas* of the Medieval Age have written a few books about *smṛti* injunctions. The Vaiṣṇavas have collected various evidence from the *śāstras* for the benefit of their respective *sampradāyas* and have written down those rules and regulations for the benefit of the Vaiṣṇavas.

***Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*,
twenty-eight principles, and other *smṛtis*.**

Under the order of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, following the pure *śāstras*, compiled *Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* for the benefit of the Vaiṣṇavas of Bengal. This *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* was edited by Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī. Approximately fifty years after this, Śrī Raghunandana Bhaṭṭācārya of Bandyaghāṭa (Bengal) wrote a few essays called *Aṣṭā-vimśati-tattva* for use in the *smārtas*' mundane dealings. In these essays he has established different opinions from the injunctions of *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*. It is also found that various *smṛti* books were composed in various parts of India for their respective use.

**Although the principle ingredients of *smṛtis*
are the same, considerations differ due to desires for either serving Kṛṣṇa or
material enjoyment.**

The question may now arise in the minds of many people that when the main foundation of the *smṛti* writers is one, then why are the conclusive regulations different? In answer to this, we can say that the writers of the Vaiṣṇava *smṛtis* are servants of the Lord whereas the writers of the *smṛtis* meant for persons attached to material enjoyment are sense gratifiers. The materialists have no taste or faith in the worship of the Lord. Therefore it is impossible to get impartial regulations from such persons.

**By following the *smārta* system
one cannot become a Vaiṣṇava.**

Although the Hindu communities are forced to follow the regulations of ordinary *smārtas*, the pure devotees who also belong to Hindu communities are not obliged to follow the *smṛtis* of the materialists. In the society of devotees it is not possible to follow the Vaiṣṇava *smṛtis* and at the same time respect the *smārta* regulations. That would be simply a sign of weakness and foolishness. When due to the influence of their knowledge the devotee householders will come to understand their own literatures and prestige, then they will no longer be dependent on others. The devotees should lead their lives in Kṛṣṇa's family according to the Vaiṣṇava *smṛtis*. Then the godless *smārtas* will never be able to dominate them.

Instructions for the present Vaiṣṇava societies.

If the Vaiṣṇava devotees spend their lives following the instructions of the spiritual master, then there will be no possibility of disturbances in this world. Sometimes the ordinary *smārtas* glance menacingly towards devotional service to Viṣṇu and thus prove their foolishness, but such narrow mentality can never prove them to be magnanimous. At present it is the age of Kali, so the pure considerations of the Vaiṣṇavas are being included among the useless arguments of the mental speculators. These are all indications of apathy towards the Absolute Truth. It does not befit a great Vaiṣṇava to accept subordination of the *smārtas* who lack transcendental realization and who are influential by material standards. They should thoroughly follow the Vaiṣṇava *smṛtis*—this is our special request. (*Sajjana-toṣaṇī*, Vol. 18, Part 2)

Vaiṣṇava and other *smṛtis*

The two types of *smṛtis* such as Vaiṣṇava and non-Vaiṣṇava. The consideration on non-Vaiṣṇava *smṛtis*.

A *smṛti-śāstra* is that which contains various rules and regulations of the religious scriptures (*Dharma-śāstras*) and which is meant to regulate the living entities' ordinary dealings. The *smṛti śāstras* are of two types—those meant for devotees and those meant for nondevotees. Without accepting transcendental consideration, the nondevotee *smārtas* have accumulated many nondevotional rules and regulations from the *smṛtis* to protect mundane social discipline and have thus established a godless society. In such a godless society, only those who are inclined towards the Supreme Lord do not follow the instructions and regulations of the *smārtas*. Although the number of persons who are averse to the devotional service of the Lord is greater, they are unable to extend their authority upon the persons who are inclined towards God. The ordinary *smārtas* declare that if one simply follows the lifeless regulations of the *śāstras* without accepting devotional service, he can be famous as a pious person. But the devotees cannot agree with such persons.

The opinion of *Smārta* Raghunandana and *Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*.

According to the propensities of people, different codes of conduct are found in the same *śāstra*. *Śrī* Raghunandana and other *smārtas*, who are expert in worldly dealings, have mentioned in their various essays about the separate arrangements for the Vaiṣṇavas. And spiritualist *smārtas* have concluded that the nondevotional statements of *smṛtis* quoted in *Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* are not meant to be followed by the Vaiṣṇavas.

The prominence of non-Vaiṣṇava *smṛtis* is due to aversion to the Lord.

Since the current of godlessness is very prominent in society, there is often no respect for Vaiṣṇava *smṛtis*. The consideration, “Because the Vaiṣṇava *smṛtis* are not always respected, they have no utility in the society,” befits a foolish society.

When people consider themselves nondevotees and averse to the Lord, then their position in godless society becomes firmly established. They also think that they cannot escape from the fierce attack of the nondevotee *smārtas*. Being initiated by a Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* yet continuing to lick the feet of *smārtas* such as Raghunandana becomes a family tradition for such a person. But actually this is the result of his forgetfulness of the self.

Initiated Vaiṣṇavas should study the Vaiṣṇava *smṛtis*.

When the initiated Vaiṣṇava will observe that the behavior of the uninitiated godless society is averse to spiritual life and when he feels the necessity of requesting the nondevotees to turn towards Kṛṣṇa, then his study of Vaiṣṇava *smṛtis* will begin. Until one advances in the spiritual path, he will continue to regard following the ordinary *smṛtis* as following religious principles. But if he is determined to follow in the footsteps of the spiritual master, then such a benefactor of society will learn to respect the Vaiṣṇava *smṛtis*.

**Even many Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas
do not respect Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa.**

Alas, what a sorrowful condition! Today in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava society, the respect for the Vaiṣṇava *smṛti* written by Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī and instructed by Śrīman Mahāprabhu is no longer present! Though we identify ourselves as servants of the Vaiṣṇavas, we disgrace our line by uprooting the practice of Vaiṣṇava *smṛtis*! And we consider those who are trying to revive the practice of Vaiṣṇava *smṛtis* as enemies!

**The antiquity of Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī's
Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā and its propagation
by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.**

The book, *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā*, written by Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī according to Vedic process, existed in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava society one hundred years prior to the period of *smārta* Raghunandana. But so far, due to the lack of *ācāryas*, this book was locked in a box and thus unknown among the Vaiṣṇavas. The need of the pure devotees that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura fulfilled by preaching this book among the Vaiṣṇavas by the will of Śrī Gaurasundara, the pure Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava society will take a thousand years to repay this debt. And if Śrī Gaurasundara desires, then Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas can unanimously adopt the principles of this Vaiṣṇava *smṛti* in order to protect their purity.

**Instructions to the devotees of Śrī Gaura
and their followers to chant the holy names
of the Lord while remaining in pure *varṇāśrama*.**

When Śrī Śrī Gaurasundara appeared in this world, at that time the Hindu society of Bengal was in a most miserable condition. Because He introduced spiritualism and chanting of the holy names of Hari, the godless society of that time did not refrain from opposing Him. Śrī Gaurāṅga's devotees and their followers should at present remain properly situated in *varṇāśrama* and continue to chant the holy names of Lord Hari.

**If the godlessness of the *smārtas* is neglected,
then the practice of Vaiṣṇava *smṛtis* will be introduced.**

If the activities of society are not related to Hari, then the living entities will be absorbed in matter due to their propensity of aversion to Hari born of *anarthas*. If in every activity of society aversion to Hari is rejected and service to Hari is accepted, and if pure *varṇāśrama-dharma* is widely reestablished, then we will soon be delighted to see respect for the Vaiṣṇava *smṛtis*.

**One who is externally a devotee of Hari but internally
a *smārta* can never become an unalloyed Vaiṣṇava.**

If we consider ourselves devotees of Hari while maintaining godlessness in all our activities and respecting ordinary *smṛtis* within our hearts, then we will never be established as nonduplicious servants of the Vaiṣṇavas. Unless we become genuine Vaiṣṇavas we will not receive the Lord's mercy and pure *varṇāśrama* principles will not be established. The pure swanlike Vaiṣṇava principles, which are beyond the *varṇāśrama* system, can never be practiced within the impure *varṇāśrama* system—this is a subject of consideration for learned people.

Equal behavior internally and externally.

“Be fixed-up internally while externally carrying out ordinary dealings.” One should not distort the real meaning of this sentence to maintain faith in impure *varṇāśrama* principles within. For the benefit of those who have taken shelter of devotional service to the Lord without duplicity, Śrī Rūpapāda has quoted the following *Nārada-pañcarātra* verse in *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*:

*laukikī vaidikī vāpi yā kriyā kriyate mune
hari-sevānukūlaiva sā kāryā bhaktim icchatā*

Those who wish to pass their lives in a way that is favorable for the cultivation of devotional service should perform all those worldly and Vedic activities that are favorable for their own service to Hari. Whatever arrangements they establish in this world should not be contrary to the internal faith of the Vaiṣṇavas.

**Since the caste Gosvāmīs and their disciples
are not established in pure *varṇāśrama* principles,
they lack Vaiṣṇava qualities.**

If we saw today that the *ācāryas* and their followers in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava societies were established in pure *varṇāśrama* principles that are favorable for devotional service, then there would be no disturbance in the internal faith of the devotees of the Lord. The Vaiṣṇavas who are internally fixed in truth feel great distress on seeing the behavior of godless society, and they are ready to disclose this outrageous behavior to the public. If the Vaiṣṇavas were not fixed in their goal, then they would not assert that both ordinary dealings and worship of the Lord should be favorable to the society. If one's heart is not fixed, or if one has a lack of determination for the lotus feet of Viṣṇu or the Vaiṣṇavas, then abominable external conceptions will not allow one to be fixed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

**Due to misinterpretation of the scriptures
by so-called *ācāryas*, the path of *bhakti***

has become full of thorns.

Taking advantage of Duryodhana's statement in *Mahābhārata*: *yathā nijukto 'smi tathā karomi*—"I will do whatever activities you will engage me in," many nondevotees are proceeding on the path of sinful activities. Taking advantage of the *Bhagavad-gītā* verse: *api cet su-durācāraḥ*—"Even if one commits the most abominable actions," hundreds of so-called Vaiṣṇavas are becoming utterly confused on the path of hell. Forgetting the real purport of the verse *yad yad ācarati śreṣṭhas*—"Whatever action a great man performs," many so-called *ācāryas* like us are spreading thorns on the path of devotional service to the Lord. Since ordinary living entities are habituated to misbehavior, such *ācāryas* proudly and duplicitously advertise themselves as internally fixed in truth while in fact they indulge in so many unfavorable activities.

Confusions in the name of *rāgānugā-bhakti*.

Confusion in the name of *rāgānugā-bhakti* has become a standard practice, and deviated societies are affected by this, thus revealing their respective internal faith. It is our humble request that the Vaiṣṇavas should carefully discuss these topics and proceed on the path of devotional service by following the Vaiṣṇava *smṛtis*. They will not benefit by attacking us unnecessarily. They should be compassionate to the body and mind and consider our humble statements. (*Sajjana-toṣaṇī*, Vol.23, Part 4)

The initiated

Three types of birth—*śaukra*, *sāvitra*, and *daikṣa*.

Three types of birth are described in Śrī Bhārgaviya *Manu-saṁhitā* and in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. They are also described in various branches of Vedic literatures. The Vedic *sandarbhās* also confirm this. *Śaukra*, *sāvitra*, and *daikṣa*—these three births are explained in the *Vedas*. When one is born from a legitimate father and mother it is called *śaukra-janma*, or seminal birth, when one receives the Gāyatrī mantra from the *ācārya* it is called *sāvitra-janma*, or Vedic birth of receiving Gāyatrī, and when one receives initiation through fire sacrifice it is called *daikṣa-janma*, or spiritual initiation birth. The seminal birth is the original, and there is no consideration of reformatory processes in this. The *śūdras* are also not meant for undergoing purificatory processes. Except the *śūdras*, everyone else undergoes purificatory process in the form of accepting Gāyatrī mantras from the *ācārya* and studying the *Vedas* in *gurukula*—this is their *sāvitra-janma*, or birth in the form of receiving Gāyatrī. When these people take spiritual initiation in order to achieve competence in the performance of sacrifices, they became known as thrice-born. Persons other than *śūdras* become twice-born in their second birth and thrice-born in their third birth. Only qualified *brāhmaṇas* are eligible for third birth, or spiritual initiation.

Ascertainment of time for the three births; what is *vrātya*?

There is no third birth for the *kṣatriyas* and *vaiśyas*. Someone born in *brāhmaṇa* family can be a twice-born, but if he surpasses sixteen years of age without

undergoing the purificatory process of receiving Gāyatrī mantras, then instead of being a twice-born he becomes known as a *vrātya*. If he undergoes the twice-born *samśkāra* at the age of twenty, then he will be known as a *kṣatriya*, and if he undergoes the *samśkāra* at the age of twenty-two, he will be known as a *vaiśya*. Beyond that, he is no longer eligible for being a twice-born and hence becomes known as a *vrātya*.

**Religious principles decline in proportion
to the influence of the yugas; there is a lack of the three Vedic births in this age
of Kali.**

From Satya-yuga to Dvāpara-yuga, the Vedic administration progressively diminished. At the arrival of Kali-yuga, the three legs of religious principles had diminished, and since the fourth leg is under attack, the Vedic ceremonies are present only in name. That is why animal sacrifices were reduced in Dvāpara-yuga, and Deity worship was introduced in its place. On the introduction of the sacrifice of chanting the holy names of the Lord in Kali-yuga, the *karma-kāṇḍa* sacrifices and Deity worship can no longer be performed properly. Though in this age of Kali the process of being twice-born by external purificatory rites is still current, there is no possibility for such persons to become Vedic thrice-born.

**Sacrifice of chanting the holy names is the qualification for performing sacrifices
in this age of Kali.**

Persons who are qualified to perform the sacrifice of chanting the holy names actually do so after being initiated. The *mahā-bhāgavatas* are most qualified for performing *hari-nāma-yajña*. In order to be qualified for *hari-nāma-yajña*, the *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs* take initiation from a *mahā-bhāgavata* with a desire to achieve the primary qualification. When a conditioned soul takes initiation from a *mahā-bhāgavata*, he understands his eternal relationship with the Lord.

**A liberated soul is initiated in the sacrifice
of chanting the holy names of the Lord
and is therefore a topmost *brāhmaṇa*.**

A liberated soul is initiated into the chanting of the holy names. A liberated soul refers to a *mahā-bhāgavata* who is beyond the principles of *varṇāśrama* and who is the best of the *brāhmaṇas*. Śrī Haridāsa Ṭhākura is the ideal and prime example. A *mahā-bhāgavata* is the best of the *brāhmaṇas* and a Vaiṣṇava. He is capable of giving initiation to others. The chanting of mantras by a *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī* does not qualify him to be liberated from material existence. Whenever he attains perfection in chanting the holy names by giving up his pride for his materially conditioned life, then he immediately becomes qualified to chant Lord Hari's holy names, which are worshipable by the liberated souls.

**Vedic ceremonies are not successful in Kali-yuga; the position of the *brāhmaṇas*
in Kali-yuga.**

The Vedic ritualistic ceremonies are not totally successful in this age of Kali. In Kali-yuga, which is full of contamination, those who are proud of being *brāhmaṇas* but act like *śūdras* are intoxicated for worshiping everything except the Absolute Truth. Although they are supposed to be knowers of the Supreme Brahman, due to

their past misdeeds, rather than worshiping Lord Viṣṇu they engage in worshiping five demigods. They neglect the supreme position of Lord Viṣṇu and consider Him equal to the demigods. That is why such persons are disqualified from performing Vedic sacrifices in the form of worshiping Viṣṇu, the master of all sacrifices.

**Introduction to Vaiṣṇava *smṛtis*,
or Vaiṣṇava code of conduct, and their propagation.**

The Vedic ritualistic ceremonies described in the Vaiṣṇava *tantras* according to Vedic injunctions are known as *Pañcarātras*, or expansions of the *Vedas*. This is accepted by sages who follow the Vedic path. Under the instruction of Śrī Gaurasundara, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācārya*, compiled the Vaiṣṇava *smṛti* called *Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*. Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, an ideal *mahāpuruṣa*, expert in Vaiṣṇava etiquette, worshipable for the *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs*, and one of the six Gosvāmīs, wrote *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā* and edited *Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, following in the footsteps of Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī. Although the rituals in the Vaiṣṇava *smṛtis* of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas have been more or less attacked by the *smārtas*, who are averse to the Lord, the day has come for propagating the Vaiṣṇava rituals.

**Every human being has a right for
*pāñcarātri*ka initiation, whereby their position
as twice-born is guaranteed.**

We can know from the scriptural evidences quoted in *Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* that all *śūdra* and non-*śūdra* human beings, though not eligible for *sāvitra*, or Vedic initiation, are certainly eligible for *pāñcarātri*ka initiation. Whether one has resided in *gurukula* after accepting Vedic initiation or not, whether a *brāhmaṇa* has fallen from his religious vows or not, or whether one is born in a *śūdra* or lower than a *śūdra* family—through pious activities, all can become eligible for receiving *pāñcarātri*ka initiation. If any human being receives *pāñcarātri*ka initiation, he is certainly a twice-born. Though women do not undergo the sacred thread ceremony, they also become twice-born and are thus qualified to chant the holy names and worship the Deities. It is to be understood that persons who are not invested with the sacred thread have not received actual initiation. The qualification of *paramahansa*, however, has no symptoms of *varṇas*, such as sacred thread, and no symptoms of *āśrama*, such as the *daṇḍa* or saffron robes. They do not engage in Deity worship like those who are situated in *varṇāśrama*. The scriptures say that as a bell metal mixed with mercury in a specific way turns into gold, when a person takes *pāñcarātri*ka initiation from a bona fide spiritual master, he certainly becomes a twice-born *brāhmaṇa*.

**The seminal *brāhmaṇas* attain
the position of *śūdras* in this age of Kali.**

Contrary to their brahminical principles, many twice-born persons in Kali-yuga worship five gods and neglect Lord Viṣṇu. They then fall from their position as *brāhmaṇas* and become *śūdras* or outcastes. What to speak of qualifying for third birth, they ascertain that the behavior of *śūdras* and outcastes is brahminical. In the last two or three hundred years the behavior of *śūdras* and outcastes has been introduced among the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas in the name of *paramahansa* Vaiṣṇava

behavior. They actually follow the materialistic *smārtas* and give *śūdra* initiation. In this way they have caused great damage to the Vedic Vaiṣṇava religion, and by taking the role of an unqualified spiritual master, they simply increase their attachment to their stomach and genitals. Instead of giving proper *pāñcarātri*ka initiation to their disciples, such people turn them into monkeys instead of making them like Śiva, turn them away from Viṣṇu instead of making them Vaiṣṇavas, and allow them to indulge in the principles of *varṇāśrama* that are based on mundane association with women.

**The current of seminal consideration is checked
in the line of Rasikānanda Prabhu.**

Had a bona fide spiritual master actually given *pāñcarātri*ka initiation to any disciple, he would not have destroyed his spiritual life by becoming puffed up by his seminal birth. Such persons would not have degraded themselves by posing as spiritual masters. Since these considerations are prominently accepted in the line of Rasikānanda Prabhu, the characteristics of pure religion preached by Śrīman Mahāprabhu and the six Gosvāmīs are beautifully protected therein.

**The initiation of social *brāhmaṇas* is not spiritual—
it is a familial act and therefore must be rejected.**

If the food and water of an initiated person is treated equally with the food and water of an uninitiated person (a *brāhmaṇa*), then intelligent people should impartially consider what injustice and outrage have been encouraged in the name of spiritualism. Our question is that if a person remains a *śūdra* even after his initiation, then in which *varṇa* does his spiritual master belong? If he was not fallen, or did not give initiation, or gave *śūdra* initiation, then why should he be called a spiritual master? Why is such a guru called a spiritual master instead of a *purohita*, or family priest? The activities of protecting one's seminal dynasty and properly regulating society that are going on at present in the name of religion are actually the duties of a priest. They are not meant for delivering the fallen souls. A spiritualist should treat such so-called gurus as priests and take initiation from a Vaiṣṇava guru in order to become a Vaiṣṇava. If, while considering them priests, family gurus are given something to maintain their livelihood, then one's spiritual activities will go on without disturbance. Every Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava should carefully consider how to restrain the professional mantra sellers, chanters, drum players, *Bhāgavatam* reciters, and Deity worshipers from troubling the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava society with financial pressure.

**If an initiated person has not undergone the sacred thread ceremony, he is not
qualified to be a guru; rather he is fit for rejection.**

If an initiated person has not undergone the sacred thread ceremony, then according to the statement of Bṛhaspati, a compiler of *Dharma-śāstras*, he has simply transgressed religious principles. The scriptures state that after receiving initiation one becomes a twice-born. If this was not so, then it is to be concluded that he has certainly not been properly initiated. If one is properly initiated, then the results must come. The cause is known by its effects. If one claims to be a Vaiṣṇava guru while neglecting the *tat tenaiva vinirdiśet*—“he should be accepted according to those symptoms of classification” statement of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*

(7.11.35), then he should be rejected. This is the purport of the scriptures.

yo vyakti nyāya rahitam anyāyena śṛṇoti yaḥ
tāv ubhau narakam ghoram vrajataḥ kālam akṣayam

guror apy avaliptasya kāryākāryam ajānataḥ
utpatha-pratipannasya parityāgo vidhīyate

“One who assumes the dress and position of an *ācārya*, who speaks against the conclusions of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* and other scriptures, or who performs *kīrtana* opposed to the proper glorification of Śrī Kṛṣṇa certainly goes to hell for countless lifetimes along with his disciples and whoever else hears such nondevotional talks and *kīrtanas*.

According to these statements of the *śāstras* one should give up disguised enemies. If one does not give up such so-called gurus, then the prestige of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava religion will not remain intact and the living entities' path of worship will be full of thorns.

Nondevotees are neither gurus nor *brāhmaṇas*.

One should not accept a non-Vaiṣṇava spiritual master. The evidence of the *śāstra* in this regard is as follows:

mahākula prasūto 'pi sarva yajñeṣu dīkṣitaḥ
sahasraśākhādhyāyī ca na guruḥ syād avaiṣṇavaḥ

mahābhāgavata śreṣṭho brāhmaṇo vai gurur nṛnām
sarveṣām eva lokānām asau pūjyo yathā hariḥ

“A non-Vaiṣṇava is never fit to be guru even if he has taken birth in a great family, performed all sacrifices, and studied many branches of the Vedas. Among all human beings the *brāhmaṇa* who is a *mahā-bhāgavata*, or great devotee, is topmost and qualified as guru. He is as worshipable as Lord Hari.”

Therefore a nondevotee cannot become a *brāhmaṇa* or a spiritual master. The evil-minded person who proudly considers himself a spiritual master of the Vaiṣṇavas cannot be accepted as a spiritual master. One who considers himself a *brāhmaṇa* and servant of the Vaiṣṇavas knows that there is no possibility of becoming a *brāhmaṇa* without being a servant of the Vaiṣṇavas; he is a real *brāhmaṇa* and a bona fide guru. A person who is proud of being a servant of the Vaiṣṇavas should take *pāñcarātri* initiation from such a spiritual master. After being duly initiated he will attain the position of a *brāhmaṇa*. He will properly follow the rules and regulations, such as the sacred thread ceremony, and in this way he will become well-behaved and humble. Otherwise, birth after birth it will never be possible to become servant of the Vaiṣṇavas.

**Those who do not accept that “only through initiation one becomes twice-born”
are to be rejected by society.**

According to the instruction of Śrī Gaurasundara, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī has written as follows:

grhīta-viṣṇu-dīkṣāko viṣṇu-pūjāparo naraḥ
vaiṣṇavo 'bhihito 'bhijña iritaro 'smādavaiṣṇavaḥ

“One who is initiated into the Vaiṣṇava mantra and who is devoted to worshipping Lord Viṣṇu is a Vaiṣṇava. One who is devoid of these practices is not a Vaiṣṇava.” One who is recognized as a Vaiṣṇava by other Vaiṣṇavas should take initiation into Viṣṇu mantra from a spiritual master. On the strength of initiation, he should accept the reformatory ceremonies of a twice-born. A qualified *brāhmaṇa* is eligible for worshipping Viṣṇu. He can then serve his spiritual master, who is a manifestation of Viṣṇu, with water and cooked foodstuffs. At that point society cannot put impediments on his path of spiritual life. If at all they do so, then one should give up such a hated society, considering it unfavorable. Every Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava should accept the society that is favorable for devotional service to Hari. One should not live in a society that is averse to spiritual life. It is stated in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (5.5.18):

*gurur na sa syāt sva-jano na sa syāt
pitā na sa syāj jananī na sā syāt*

*daivam na tat syān na patiś ca sa syān
na mocayed yaḥ samupeta-mṛtyum*

“One who cannot deliver his dependents from the path of repeated birth and death should never become a spiritual master, a father, a husband, a mother or a worshipable demigod.”

After the disappearance of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, Vaiṣṇava society fell under the subordination of *smārtas*.

Every Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava should consider whether it is proper for a person to disassociate oneself from spiritual life while keeping faith in insignificant matter. One's relationship of sense gratification and maintaining godless interests in this world is for up to one hundred years, whereas spiritual life without material desires and with love of Hari is for eternal life. After the disappearance of Śrī Caitanyadeva and His six Gosvāmī associates, the confusion and licking the feet of *smārtas* that goes on in the name of Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava society is simply a corruption of Vaiṣṇava religion. In order to stop this corruption, Śrī Gaurasundara has sent His own associates from time to time. So why are we not following those Vaiṣṇava *smārtas*, who are *mahājanas* conversant with spiritual knowledge, and thereby being misguided? Why are we turning away from scriptural knowledge and falling in the jugglery of the selfish nondevotees, thus wasting our valuable lives in aversion to Hari? Will godless society remain prominent forever? Will the beneficial words of the devotees, the subtle purport of the *śāstras*, and the impartiality of the compilers of the *śāstras* be neglected forever? Will the glories of Śrī Hari-*bhakti-vilāsa* ever remain fallen in the dark pit of the godless *smārtas*?

**Instruction to follow *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā*
of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī.**

Will Bhavadēva's guidelines cover the *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā* forever? Raghunandana's *Samskāra-tattva* has been permanently covered. It has never been opened up. So why will *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā* be disregarded? We are humbly appealing to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas who are conversant with the *śāstras* to open their eyes and follow the previous *ācāryas*. May they carefully discuss the *Mahābhārata* verse *śūdro 'py āgama-sampanno dvijo bhavati samskṛtaḥ*—“even a

śūdra can be purified though carefully following the proper conduct of a *brāhmaṇa* as prescribed in the *Pañcaratra*” and the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* verse *yad anyatrāpi dṛśyeta tat tenaiva vinirdiśet*—“if the qualities of one group are found in the men of another, those men should be recognized by their qualities, by their symptoms” and be freed from the shackles of the Hindu society that is averse to Viṣṇu. Then they will be freed from material enjoyment, and only then they will be able to worship the Deities and chant the holy names of Hari.

Assurance of reestablishment of Vaiṣṇava *smṛti*.

“Those who are initiated cannot be *brāhmaṇas*,” and “only by being born in a *brāhmaṇa* family does one become a *brāhmaṇa*”—These misconceptions have created a great deal of disturbance and caused the degradation of religious principles. These misconceptions must be eradicated. Once Tridaṇḍī Sannyāsī Śrī Rāmānuja Svāmī of South India, who was an incarnation of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, delivered the Vaiṣṇavas of this world from the clutches of the worshipers of five gods. Today by the endeavors of the weak servants of the Vaiṣṇavas like us, the religious principles of the scriptures will be again established in Āryāvarta. We are taking shelter of Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga in order to deliver the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava society from the clutches of the envious, pseudo Vaiṣṇavas such as *āula*, *bāula*, *prākṛta-sahajiyā*, *neḍā*, *daraveśa*, *sāni*, *gaura-nāgarī*, seminal Gosvāmīs, and pseudo renunciates. Please come, O brothers! Be spiritualists, give up the conception of *prākṛta-sahajiyā*; let us sing, following in the footsteps of Śrīla Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, who is the root inaugurator of the pure devotional current.

<i>āmi ta' vaiṣṇava,</i>	<i>e' buddhi haile,</i>	<i>amānī nā haba āmi</i>
<i>`pratiṣṭhāśā āsi'</i>	<i>hṛdaya duṣibe,</i>	<i>haiba nirayagāmī</i>
<i>tomāra kiṅkara,</i>	<i>āpane jāniba,</i>	<i>guru ābhimāna tyaji</i>
<i>tomāra ucchiṣṭa</i>	<i>pada-jala reṇu,</i>	<i>sardā niṣkapāṭe bhaji</i>
<i>nije śreṣṭha jāni,</i>	<i>ucchiṣṭhādi dāne,</i>	<i>habe abhimāna bhāra</i>
<i>tāi śiṣya tava,</i>	<i>thākiyā sarvadā,</i>	<i>nā laiba pūjā kāra</i>
<i>amānī mānada,</i>	<i>haile kīrtane,</i>	<i>adhikāra dibe tumi</i>
<i>tomāra caraṇe,</i>	<i>niṣkapāṭe sadā,</i>	<i>kāṇḍiyā luṭiba bhūmi</i>

“If I consider that I am a Vaiṣṇava, then I will not be modest. Then the desire for name and fame will pollute my heart, and I will thus go to hell. I will consider myself your servant and give up the pride of being a spiritual master. I will accept remnants and the water that has washed the feet of a Vaiṣṇava without duplicity. If I think I am the best and thus give remnants to others, then I will simply become proud. Therefore I will always remain your disciple, and I will not accept worship from anyone. If I do not desire respect for myself but give respect to others, then you will give me the right to chant the holy names. I will fall down at your feet without duplicity and cry while rolling on the ground.”

Vaiṣṇavas are automatically *brāhmaṇas*
as well as transcendental to the modes of material nature.

The mundane fruitive workers consider
that their Vedic branch is different than the Vedic branch of the *ācāryas* in

disciplic succession.

The Vedic branch that the *ācāryas* of the disciplic succession from Lord Brahmā have accepted appears different to the fruitive workers, because due to their narrow-mindedness they find it unfavorable to their own Vedic branch. In the Eleventh Canto of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* these topics are properly described. We will elaborate on those points at the appropriate place, so we are not bringing up those innumerable topics here.

Without undergoing sacred thread ceremony it is impossible to become a twice-born.

Regarding *saṁskāras*, it is written in the *Dharma-sāstra* of Yājñavalkya that all one's sins are eradicated by undergoing purificatory processes. The *śūdras* are simply sinful, therefore there are no *saṁskāras* prescribed for them. It is not a fact that just because one is born in a sinful family he will not be able to hear *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* or worship the Supreme Lord. According to the *sarveṣāṁ mad-upāsanam*—“worship of Me is to be practiced by all human beings” verse of Eleventh Canto and *yasya yal lakṣaṇaṁ proktaṁ*—“if one shows the described symptoms” verse of Seventh Canto of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* and innumerable other similar statements, it is confirmed that everyone has a right to be freed from sinful reactions and worship the Lord. That is why Ācārya Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has stated in his *Durgama-saṅgamaṇī* commentary on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* that until one undergoes all the limbs of the initiation process, he does not become a twice-born *brāhmaṇa*. In order to become twice-born, the sages underwent *sāvitrya-saṁskāra*. Similarly, unless an initiated person undergoes the *sāvitrya-saṁskāra*, he will not be accepted as a *brāhmaṇa* in the worldly society.

Sinless Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī achieved everything under the shelter of *paramahansa* Śrī Śukadeva.

According to the statements of the sages headed by Śaunaka, Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī has been established as sinless. It is understood that he was not born in a sinful or outcaste family. But the fruitive workers who follow an incomplete portion of a branch of Vedic literature consider him a non-*brāhmaṇa* outcaste and devoid of any *saṁskāras*. Thus they neglect the spiritual master and commit offence. That is why Śrī Vyāsadeva has recorded the word *anagha*, or sinless, spoken by the sages while describing Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī in order to set an example for his successor *ācāryas*. Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī gave up his identification with a lower family and took shelter of Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī. Because of accepting subordination to the spiritual master he became qualified to hear *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*:

*jñāne prayāsam udapāsyā namanta eva
jīvanti san-mukharitām bhavadiya-vārtām*

*sthāne sthitāḥ śruti-gatām tanu-vān-manobhir
ye prāyaśo 'jita jito 'py asi tais tri-lokyām*

“Those who, even while remaining situated in their established social positions, throw away the process of speculative knowledge and with their body, words and mind offer all respects to descriptions of Your personality and activities, dedicating their lives to these narrations, which are vibrated by You personally and by Your

pure devotees, certainly conquer Your Lordship, although You are otherwise unconquerable by anyone within the three worlds.” After hearing this *śloka* from Śrī Śukadeva, Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī Mahārāja, though born in a low class family, heard *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* with his body, mind, and speech from *paramahansa* Śrī Śukadeva, the king of the Vaiṣṇavas. Thus he underwent all types of *saṁskāras* and ultimately accepted the external dress meant for *paramahansas* and approved by *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. Unable to find any symptoms in his external dress that he had undergone any *saṁskāras*, the sages, who were mental speculators and controlled by the illusory energy, through their worldly godless vision simply understood him as a non-*brāhmaṇa*, professional outcaste saint. But Sarasvatī Devī inspired them to address him as sinless and professor of the *Dharma-śāstras*. Since foolishness is an impediment on the path of good fortune to the world, it is not encouraged by Kṛṣṇa, who is beyond the jurisdiction of sense perception, because a gentle favored disciple receives all confidential mysteries from his spiritual master.

The real meaning of the word *āyusman*, or “O immortal one,” spoken by the sages headed by Śaunaka.

Since the sages headed by Śaunaka accepted Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī as their spiritual master, the sages prayed to Sūta Gosvāmī to instruct them in the knowledge attained by gentle obedient disciples that he had received. Many so-called spiritual masters, instead of desiring welfare for their disciples, hate them in order to fulfill their own material desires. Such so-called spiritual masters do not know what is beneficial for themselves, rather they accept something inauspicious as auspicious. The sages did not address Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī as *āyusman*, or “O immortal one,” merely out of affection. The word *āyusman* spoken by the sages is an expression of gratitude or appreciation of an experienced spiritual master by the ignorant people. Sūta Gosvāmī simply repeated the message he had heard from his spiritual master to his disciples, and therefore he was addressed as *āyusman*.

**Śrī Vyāsadeva, Śrī Śukadeva, and others
are spiritual masters of the entire world;
they are free from illusion and liberated souls.**

According to the injunction *na prākṛtatvam iha bhakta janasya paśyet*—“a devotee should not be seen from a materialistic point of view,” the disciplic succession from Vyāsadeva does not consider that spiritual masters are burnt in the blazing fire of material existence. The nature of the material world is that whether one's son is honest or dishonest, everyone should give up the worship of Hari, cry out “O my son!” and forget Kṛṣṇa. But the similar expression displayed by Vyāsa is simply to increase the ignorance of the mundane fruitive workers and bewilder them. Actually Śukadeva was a great Vaiṣṇava and a renounced *paramahansa*. Remaining aloof from his association is not acceptable to Vyāsa and his descendants. In order to convince the materialists of this fact, such a pastime was enacted by Śrī Vyāsadeva. The pastimes of Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī suffering pain from boils and Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra being hit by the arrow of a hunter named Uddhava were both enacted to increase the illusion of ignorant people. It is to be understood that the propagation of Māyāvāda philosophy by Śrī Mahādeva and the propagation through Manu of social religious scriptures by Lord Brahmā were both

meant for bewildering unqualified people. Śrī Śukadeva was an ideal personality and spiritual master of the entire world. As soon as he completed his study with Vyāsadeva, he set out to bestow mercy on all living entities. From the external point of view the return of *paramahansa* Śrī Śukadeva to the royal assembly of Parīkṣit and his association with Sūta Gosvāmī may create apparent contradictions, but according to the considerations of *paramahansas*, these were pure standards of behavior. One who does not accept this commits an offence at the feet of the spiritual master.

The misunderstandings of conditioned fruitive workers regarding the *paramahansa* spiritual master.

Since the mood of *paramahansa* awakened in the hearts of all living entities, even the trees placed Śrī Śukadeva in their hearts. He remained in the hearts of the trees like the indwelling Supersoul. The whole world serves the *jagad-guru*. The father's call to his Vaiṣṇava son and the feelings of separation from the association of a Vaiṣṇava were reciprocated by mental agitation in every Vaiṣṇava heart, including the trees. This is indicative of hearing and chanting from a spiritual master. Following Vyāsadeva's ideal character and being controlled by devotional service in the form of chanting, the trees of the forest under the shelter of Śrī Vyāsa also worshiped the Vaiṣṇava. Those whose bondage in fruitive activities has not been untied wrongly conclude that the Vaiṣṇavas are also subjected to birth and the bondage of karma. Therefore in order to nourish their mood of ignorance, Vyāsadeva exemplified the bondage of material existence. As a result, attached householders foolishly misunderstand his lamentation for his son as a religious principle. But the descendants of Śrī Vyāsadeva understand that separation from a Vaiṣṇava is extremely painful. If one does not take shelter of such a *paramahansa* Vaiṣṇava, he will never be relieved from the pain of material existence.

One Caste

The history of *haṁsa*, *paramahansa*, and *bhāgavata paramahansa*.

In the ancient times there only one caste lived in India called *haṁsa*. They were yogis, devotees of the Lord, or knowers of Brahman engaged in studying the *Vedas*. Among the *haṁsas*, those who on the strength of either devotional service, yoga, or impersonal knowledge distinguished themselves over their respective groups were accepted by the *haṁsas* as *paramahansas*. Among the ordinary impersonalists and yogis of India, the topics of the *bhāgavata paramahansas* are particularly mentioned in a few places. The difference between *bhāgavata paramahansas* with impersonal knowledge and yogic *paramahansas* is clearly explained by Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī when he discusses Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān as the *advaya-jñāna*, or nondual Absolute Truth.

The explanation of Brahman and Jīva by Śrīmad Ānandatīrtha Madhvācārya.

The word Brahman refers to the greatness and nourishment of unbroken knowledge or supreme consciousness, unalloyed consciousness, pure

consciousness, and eternal consciousness. Śrīmad Ānandatīrtha Pūrṇaprajña Madhvācārya Bhagavān has fully unfolded the difference between Brahman and the living entities in the hearts of his followers. He ascertained that in the constitutional position of the living entities, they are situated in unbroken knowledge. Since the living entities are constitutionally marginal, sometimes they identify themselves as under the subordination of unbroken knowledge, sometimes they misidentify themselves as Brahman or knowers of dualistic knowledge, and sometimes they misidentify themselves as matter, which is opposite to Brahman. As soon as the living entities give up the subordination of matter they realize themselves as Vaiṣṇavas. At that time, due their spiritual nature, material desires and material conceptions of life cannot attack them.

**Due to a lack of knowledge about
the Supreme Brahman, unauthorized people neglect the spiritual master and
glorify themselves.**

The living entities' lack of knowledge about the Absolute Truth makes them ignorant of Brahman. Sometimes they accept Brahman as an inferior object and try to establish themselves as Brahman. Being desirous of material enjoyment, they sometimes determine to accept the illusory energy of the Lord as Brahman. Those who do not know the truth neglect their spiritual master and, with the help of material knowledge, follow the ascending path. They live within this world and unnecessarily praise themselves as knowers of Brahman. The *hamsas*, however, know perfectly well that Brahman, which is devoid of form and variegatedness, is a partial manifestation of the Supreme Lord.

***Bhāgavata paramahamsas* are the highest yogis
and the topmost knowers of Brahman.**

Some of the *hamsas* know the localized aspect of the Absolute Truth as Paramātmā and thus disassociate themselves from the activities of this material world, which is created by the illusory energy of the Lord. The perfection of this disassociation qualifies them to meditate on the Supersoul as yogis. It is not very difficult to attain spiritual knowledge or devotional service to Viṣṇu from the respective positions of either persons who have realized Brahman or yogis who have attained perfection, rather it is their gradual progress. The position of the devotees of the Lord, or that of *bhāgavata paramahamsas*, is the highest perfectional platform for both impersonal *hamsas* and yogi *hamsas*. When a devotee, or *bhāgavata paramahamsa*, descends to the lower levels, he should not be considered either a pseudo impersonalist or a pseudo yogi. The *bhāgavata paramahamsa* is the highest yogi and supreme knower of Brahman. One should not consider him inferior to either the impersonalists or yogis.

**According to the symptoms of qualities and occupation, the divisions of
varṇāśrama are created.**

When the *hamsas* give up impersonal knowledge and endeavor to distinguish themselves from other *hamsas* while following their *Gr̥hya-sūtras*, or social codes of conduct, then according to their qualities and activities the four *varṇas* and four *āśramas* are created. In Satya-yuga there was only one *varṇa* called *hamsa*. Later, after 1,728,000 years passed, the *varṇāśrama* system was inaugurated among the

ham̐sas. These divisions were effected according to one's occupation, qualities, symptoms, and possibility of future utility. According to the differences in the processes of one's goal, perfection, and intelligence, there can be two types of *varṇāśrama*. It has been a current practice in this country that the ascertainment of *varṇa* according to seminal consideration is based on future utility. Moreover, one's occupation, nature, and symptoms have always nourished the seminal system. When we discuss the topics of Kavaṣa mentioned in the *Aitareya Upaniṣad* and the topics of Jābāla mentioned in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* then we will properly understand seminal consideration. *Śrī Mahābhārata*, *Hari-vaṁsa*, and the eighteen *Purāṇas* have mentioned both processes of *varṇāśrama*. It is not that the system of *varṇāśrama* according to seminal consideration, which began in Tretā-yuga, will continue forever and should be kept intact, though its purpose is lost—the truthful *ham̐sas* of India do not accept this. The statements of the *Vedas* such as the *Kalpa-śāstras* and the *Gṛhya-sūtras* of Gobhila, Kātyāyana, and others that a *brāhmaṇa* should undergo the sacred thread ceremony at the age of eight is only a proposal. Although all *ham̐sas* are equal, those who wish to follow the *Gṛhya-sūtras* and their descendants are to be considered prospective *brāhmaṇas*. A twice-born *brāhmaṇa* is required to undergo social purificatory processes. Those who disagree or are unqualified for such *saṁskāras*, in other words, those who do not exhibit any inclination for Brahman, such people among the *ham̐sas* are non-*brāhmaṇas* devoid of *saṁskāras*, or simply seminal descendants. A twice-born must follow the rules and regulation of the *Gṛhya-sūtras*. According to familial tradition, those who followed were accepted as twice-born. Those *ham̐sas* who due to envious nature or laziness were addressed as *śūdras* by the *brāhmaṇas* could not become twice-born. When the descendants of such people will be in favor of undergoing social reformation, then they will not be bereft of the opportunity from being reinstated in their respective occupation, quality, and nature.

**Due to forgetfulness of understanding Brahman,
the philosophy of atheism expands
and the Absolute Truth is disregarded.**

Among the *ham̐sas*, the occupations, natures, and symptoms of the yogis, the worshipers, and the knowers of Brahman have always been there, are there, and will be there. In ancient times, when the *varṇāśrama* system was not prominent, the *ham̐sas* alone attained the platform of *bhāgavata paramaham̐sas*. There were also many *paramaham̐sas* found amongst the yogis, who were less inclined towards cultivation of the Absolute Truth, and amongst the impersonalists, who were engaged in mental speculation. But when the impersonal conception among the *ham̐sas* of the world gradually sank in the deep water of forgetfulness, then atheism began to expand, the words of the spiritual master were reduced to chaos, and disregard for the truths of the *Vedas* covered the hearts of some *ham̐sas* like fog. Being deceived by their own material knowledge, they began to disrespect the Absolute Truth. In this way, the *ham̐sas* were divided into four *varṇas*. (Weekly *Gauḍīya*, Vol. 1)

The different varṇas

Only the *varṇa* called *ham̐sa*

existed among the people of Satya-yuga;
divisions were created in Tretā-yuga.

In ancient times there were no divisions of *varṇa* among the people of India. Later, in the beginning of Tretā-yuga the process of dividing the *varṇas* was introduced. It is stated in the Seventeenth Chapter of the Eleventh Canto of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* as follows:

āḍau kṛta-yuge varṇo nṛṇām haṁsa iti smṛtaḥ
tretā-mukhe mahā-bhāga prāṇān me hṛdayāt trayī
vipra-kṣatriya-viṭ-śūdrā mukha-bāhūru-pāda-jāḥ
vairājāt puruṣāj jātā ya ātmācāra-lakṣaṇāḥ

“In the beginning, in Satya-yuga, there is only one social class, called *haṁsa*, to which all human beings belong. O greatly fortunate one, at the beginning of Tretā-yuga Vedic knowledge appeared from My heart, which is the abode of the air of life, in three divisions—as *Rg*, *Sāma* and *Yajur*. The *brāhmaṇas* appeared from the Lord's face, the *kṣatriyas* from the Lord's arms, the *vaiśyas* from the Lord's thighs and the *śūdras* from the legs of that mighty form. Each social division was recognized by its particular duties and behavior.” In his commentary on *Mahābhārata* (*Śānti-parva* 188.4), Śrī Nīlakaṇṭha has said: *varṇāḥ sātvikam rājasam tāmasam miśram ceti svacchatvādi sāmāt guṇa-vṛtam varṇa śabdenocyate*—“The different *varṇas* were created according to the mixture of the three modes of nature—goodness, passion, and ignorance—as well as according to one's qualification and propensities.” The word *varṇa* refers to the qualities and occupation of the living entities.

The *brāhmaṇas* are the highest among the *varṇas*—
the *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas*, and *śūdras* are determined according to qualities and activities.

Śrī Bharadvāja has said in *Śrī Mahābhārata*, *Śānti-parva*, *Mokṣa-dharma*, Chapter 188, as follows:

jaṅgamānām asaṅkhyeyāḥ sthāvarāṇām ca jātayāḥ
teṣām vividha-varṇānām kuto varṇa-viniścayaḥ

“There are innumerable castes among the animate and inanimate living entities. How does one conclusively ascertain their various *varṇas*?” In answer to this, Bhṛgu has said:

na viśeṣo' sti varṇānām sarvaṁ brāhmam-idaṁ jagat
brahmaṇā pūrva-sṛṣṭam hi karmabhir-varṇatām gatam
brāhmaṇānām sito varṇaḥ kṣatriyāṇām tu lohitaḥ
vaiśyānām pītako varṇaḥ śūdrānām asitas tathā
himsānṛta-priya-lubdhāḥ sarva-karmopajīvināḥ
kṛṣṇāḥ śauca-paribhraṣṭās te dvijāḥ śūdratām gatāḥ
ity etaiḥ karmabhir vyastā dvijā varṇāntaram gatāḥ

Actually the living entity does not belong to any *varṇa*, in other words, a soul is devoid of any *varṇa*. In ancient times Lord Brahmā created this world and filled it with *brāhmaṇas*. Later on, according to their activities, people were divided into various *varṇas*, such as *kṣatriya*. Since the *brāhmaṇas* possess the qualities of goodness, such as peacefulness and self-control, they are white-colored. The *kṣatriyas* possess the propensities of passion such as heroism and strength, so they are red-colored. The *vaiśyas* possess the mixed qualities of passion and ignorance such as farming, and thus they are yellow-colored. The *śūdras* are simply in the mode of ignorance, devoid of any self-manifested propensity, like a cart directed by others, and thus they are black-colored. Persons who engage in all types of activities become envious, fond of speaking lies, and greedy because of being controlled by the mode of ignorance. Due to being devoid of all *samskāras*, such people become impure and thus degrade from their positions of *kṣatriyas* and *vaiśyas* to the platform of *śūdras*. Because of these low-class activities, the *brāhmaṇas* degraded from their position and attained positions such as *kṣatriya*. All living entities are by nature qualified to understand Brahman and possess the qualities of goodness. When they are in the mode of goodness they are white, and by the mixture of goodness and passion they become red. When people are in the mixed modes of passion and ignorance, devoid of goodness, they are yellow; and people who are simply in the mode of ignorance, devoid of the modes of goodness and passion, become black. One accepts a particular color and is thus identified as belonging to that *varṇa*, therefore his *varṇa* is determined by the color and qualities that he possesses. The *brāhmaṇas* are situated as the root or topmost among these divisions of *varṇas*.

The history of the origin of the *brāhmaṇas* mentioned in the *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads*; the rules and regulations for undergoing the sacred thread ceremony.

The divisions of *brāhmaṇas* are found in the *Puruṣa-sūkta* section of the *Ṛg Veda* (10.90.11). The origin of the *brāhmaṇas* is described in the *Kṛṣṇa-yajur-veda-saṁhitā* (7.1.1.4), the *Śukla-yajur-veda-saṁhitā* (14.28), the *Atharva Veda* (15.10.1 and 19.6.6), the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* (1.2.6.7 and 3.12.9.3), as well as in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (2.1.4.13).

The rules for making the son of a qualified twice-born who has properly undergone the forty-eight purificatory processes a *brāhmaṇa* is followed by the seminal descendants of the *brāhmaṇas*. In this way they undergo purificatory processes and are accepted as *brāhmaṇas*. Knowing that the son of a *brāhmaṇa* is eligible for becoming a *brāhmaṇa*, statements such as *aṣṭa-varṣam brāhmaṇam upanayīta*—“a *brāhmaṇa* should undergo the sacred thread ceremony at the age of eight” are found in the *Vedas*. Also in the *Gobhīlīya Gṛhya-sūtras* it is stated: *garbhāṣṭameṣu brāhmaṇam upanayet*—“a *brāhmaṇa* should be awarded the sacred thread at the age of eight.” The period for undergoing this ceremony extends up to the age of sixteen. When one surpasses this age, he should not be awarded the *brāhmaṇa* thread. Such a person is called a fallen twice-born as well as a *vrātya*, or one who fails to fulfill his vow. A *vrātya* should neither be given a sacred thread, be allowed to study the *Vedas*, nor given a daughter in charity.

The *upanayana-samskāra* and qualification for spiritual initiation according to the Vedic *Gṛhya* injunctions.

It is mentioned in the *smṛtis*:

gr̥hyokta-karmaṇā yena samīpaṁ nīyate guroḥ
bālo vedāya tad yogāt bālasyopanayanam viduḥ

“According to Vedic *Gr̥hya* injunctions, the ceremony in which a boy is taken to an *ācārya*, or Vedic teacher, for studying the *Vedas* is called *upanayana*, or the sacred thread ceremony. There is no use of studying the *Vedas* before one's knowledge is matured. That is why it takes a minimum of seven years to complete other necessary purificatory processes before one is ready for *upanayana*. It is not proper to take a boy to an *ācārya* for studying the *Vedas* before the age of eight. It is not possible for a boy of that age to live in the *gurukula*, away from his parent's house. During the course of his Vedic studies, a *brāhmaṇa* becomes qualified for following the Vedic injunctions. Ultimately he gets the opportunity to be initiated in a fire sacrifice. If there is no possibility of sending a *brāhmaṇa* boy to the house of an *ācārya* before the age of sixteen, or if the young *brāhmaṇa* boy has no taste or desire for studying the *Vedas*, then it is to be understood that according to his taste he does not wish to become a *brāhmaṇa* by undergoing the *upanayana saṁskāra*. From the topics of *Jāḍa Bharata* it is understood that though he was born in a *brāhmaṇa* family that strictly followed the purificatory processes, he was never inclined towards ritualistic ceremonies. If the boy born in a *brāhmaṇa* family exhibits no taste even for becoming a *kṣatriya* or *vaiśya*, then he will neither want to go to *gurukula* or undergo the preliminary purificatory processes. In the process of Vedic *karma-kāṇḍa*, the fire is accepted as the original ingredient in all *saṁskāras*. This *karma-kāṇḍa* process is a polished stone meant for some future purpose, but the end result is uncertain.

It is not a fact that material endeavors will always be successful. Whether a boy is interested or not, his father and society force him to go to *gurukula* in order to keep the family and social tradition intact. The result of this is that though the boy is induced by his father or others to follow their proposed fruitive activities, he often does not achieve the desired result due to a lack of qualification and taste. For this reason, even though a *brāhmaṇa* boy acts according to the instructions of his well-wishers and undergoes the sacred thread ceremony, he nevertheless later changes his *varṇa* to *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*, *śūdra*, or outcaste.

**The *varṇas* are meant for only
the gross and subtle bodies of a living entity.**

Only the gross and subtle bodies accept *varṇas*. A soul's qualification for accepting *varṇas* lies only in his two bodies. Although a *hamsa*, or a *brāhmaṇa* free from the three modes of material nature, accepts a body, nevertheless he is born from the limbs of the universal form of the Lord. Therefore his unchangeable transcendental existence is divided into four categories according to conditional mundane considerations. The qualities and activities produced from these qualities are the cause for dividing the *varṇas* of the living entities, who are otherwise equiposed. The totality of human beings are divided into four categories according to their symptoms. If one wants to know a person by his symptoms or by the process of division, then it is to be understood that his gross bodily identification is limited to his father's family. Later on his subtle identification or occupational identification helps create the division of *varṇas*. While observing the symptoms of a *brāhmaṇa*'s subtle identification, we often end up analyzing the origin of his

gross body. But if we conclude that the subtle body has emanated from the gross body, then we have to accept that a seed comes from the skin of a fruit. Then we will have to say that the gross body is the father of the subtle body. But actually such a fantasy is not approved in consideration of the subtle body. When the gross body is finished, the subtle body thinks of accepting another gross body, therefore it is understood that the subtle body existed before the gross body. Those who accept the process of reincarnation or karma do not believe that the subtle body has come from the gross, rather they accept that the subtle body puts on a gross covering. Material desires alone accumulate the ingredients for a gross body from this world, consisting of the three modes of nature. The ingredients that a gross body gradually accepts from this world are actually approved by the subtle body, or the mind. The living entity's tastes develop due to his subtle body, and the gross body is forced to accept them. The mind, or the subtle body, which is a reflection of spirit, is the cause for accepting gross elements.

Ascertainment of *varṇas* is possible only by occupation, it is not bound by seminal consideration.

The color of *varṇa* is determined through the process of seeing. Imagination is created or conceptions manifest through senses like the eyes. When a person's external identification is determined through the process of gross seeing, then the identification of that person's *varṇa* is limited to seminal consideration. But thoughtful persons ascertain that the consideration of one's occupation is the only criteria for determining one's *varṇa*. Since everyone will not be sufficiently thoughtful, seminal identification is given prominence in order to properly execute gross social activities or determine sexual relationships. When the seminal identification process is prominent, then there is possibility of many problems in ascertaining one's *varṇa*. That is why we do not usually find an agreement on this subject in ordinary *Dharma-śāstras* or *Gṛhya-sūtras*. When the Vedic rituals are converted into the fruitive path of asslike less intelligent people, then following the injunctions of the *Pañcarātras* takes precedence to those Vedic rituals. The injunctions of the *Pañcarātras*, which replaces the Vedic ritualistic performances, consists of five forms of knowledge as found in the *Vedas*, the *Āraṇyaka*, and pure Sāṅkhya *bhakti-yoga*. The Vedic rituals defined by the fruitive workers are different from the rituals conducted by the followers of the *Āraṇyaka*. The Vedic rituals of devotees on the path of worship are supported by the *Pañcarātras* and the *Vedas*. The Vedic rituals of the impersonalists are supported by the *Upaniṣads*. The *smṛtis* and the *Purāṇas* have illuminated the subject of the *Vedas*. They did not totally discourage the polluted Vedic path of the fruitive workers, rather they consider this path as incomplete and meant for less intelligent people.

**Those who reject the path of the *Vedas*,
the *smṛtis*, the *Purāṇas* and the *Pañcarātras*
are simply creating disturbances.**

That is why Śrī Nārada-*pañcarātra* states:

*śruti-smṛti-purāṇādi- pañcarātra-vidhiṁ vinā
aikāntikī harer bhaktir utpātāyaiva kalpate*

“Devotional service of the Lord that ignores the authorized Vedic literatures like

the *Upaniṣads*, *Purāṇas*, and *Nārada-pañcarātra* is simply an unnecessary disturbance in society.” When the rules and regulations of the *Vedas* are inappropriate due to differences in time, place, and persons, then *tantras* that are favorable to the *Vedas* or expansions of the *Vedas* that are able to fulfill such deficiency are called *Pañcarātras*. The *Pañcarātra* scriptures emanated from the mouth of Śrī Nārāyaṇa in order to keep the Vedic injunctions intact and fulfill the vacancy created by obstructions to the proper utility of the *varṇāśrama* principles mentioned in the *Gṛhyas*, which are subordinate to the Vedic injunctions. The Vedic process that does not take support from the *Pañcarātras* is often obstructed. Any system followed in the name of Vedic injunctions that is opposed to the *Pañcarātras* and that encourages a distorted form of worshiping Lord Viṣṇu is nothing but a disturbance in the society.

The worship of the Supreme Lord that is beyond the realm of sense enjoyment and liberation is superior to the worship of either the *karmīs*, who are fond of sense enjoyment, or the *jñānīs*, who are fond of liberation.

Due to the influence of time, the rules and regulations of the *Gṛhyas* or Vedic injunctions are not being properly followed. The glories of Śāṇḍilya's *Pañcarātra*, which was misinterpreted by Śrī Śaṅkarācārya as averse to the *Vedas*, have been established in Śrī *Mahābhārata* since time immemorial as favorable to the *Vedas*. The activities that puffed-up fruitive workers consider Vedic are actually material enjoyment that according to the followers of *Pañcarātra* is averse to the devotional service of Viṣṇu. In the hands of the *karmīs* the Vedic literatures yield forgetfulness of the Lord, while in the hands of the followers of the *Pañcarātras* the very same Vedic literatures are accepted as the basis for worshiping Lord Hari. The fruitive activities based on material enjoyment, the impersonal knowledge based on renunciation, and the worship of the Lord based on service attitude, which is beyond material enjoyment and mental speculation, produce different results among the three communities. Although they all endeavor to follow the Vedic injunctions, there are differences among them. Therefore if one wants to debate over the various Vedic injunctions and the *varṇāśrama* system followed by these three communities of people—the *karmīs*, *jñānīs*, and *bhaktas*—it is very difficult to achieve success.

We will gradually discuss the terms and conditions for accepting *grhya-saṁskāras*, which are properly established by Vedic injunctions in the *Mahābhārata*, the *Sātvata-saṁhitā*, the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, and the *Pañcarātras*. (Weekly *Gauḍīya*, Vol. 1, Part 19)

The third birth

**There are three kinds of birth—
śaukra, *sāvitra*, and *daikṣa*.**

Although “third birth” may sound new to many persons, there are so many references to this in the scriptures. Those who have studied the Bhārgavīya *Manu-saṁhitā* must have come across the following verse in the Second Chapter: *mātur agre 'dhi-jananam dvitīyam mauñjibandhane*—“a *brāhmaṇa* gets his first birth from his mother (*śaukra-janma*, seminal birth), and he gets his second birth by receiving

the sacred thread (*sāvitra-janma*).” When a twice-born receives spiritual initiation in the form of hearing the *Vedas* (about one's relationship with the Lord) along with fire sacrifice, it is called “third birth.” The first birth is the birth from one's father and mother. After duly undergoing the purificatory processes one receives second birth from a father in the form of the *ācārya* and a mother in the form of *Gāyatrī*. When a twice-born becomes qualified to serve the Supreme Lord, he gets his third birth from a father in the form of the spiritual master and a mother in the form of initiation mantras. In the ascending path, three births—the birth of the body, the birth of the mind, and the formal birth—are found. These three births are described in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* as *śaukra*, *sāvitra*, and *daikṣa* births. It is stated in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (4.31.10 and 10.23.40) as follows: *kiṁ janmabhis tribhir yeva śaukra-sāvitra-yājñikaiḥ*—“A civilized human being has three kinds of births. The first birth is by a pure father and mother, and this birth is called birth by semen. The next birth takes place when one is initiated by the spiritual master, and this birth is called *sāvitra*. The third birth, called *yājñika*, takes place when one is given the opportunity to worship Lord Viṣṇu.” and *dhig janma nas tri-vṛd yat tad dhig vrataṁ dhig bahu-jñatām*—“To hell with our threefold birth, our vow of celibacy, and our extensive learning!” In his commentary on the later verse, Śrīdhara Svāmīpāda has written: *trivṛt śaukraṁ sāvitram daikṣam iti triguṇitam janma. śukra-sambandhi-janma viśuddha-mātā-pitṛbhyām utpattih. sāvitryam upanayanena yājñikaṁ dīkṣayā*.—“There are three kinds of birth—*śaukra*, *sāvitra*, and *daikṣa*—according to their different qualities. The *śaukra-janma* refers to birth from a pure father and mother, the *sāvitra-janma* refers to birth by undergoing the sacred thread ceremony, and *daikṣa-janma* refers to spiritual initiation before the sacrificial fire.” Birth from a pure father and mother means *brāhmaṇād brāhmaṇyām jātaḥ*—“a *brāhmaṇa* is born from a *brāhmaṇa* father and mother.”

The qualifications of seminal *brāhmaṇas* and examples of professional *brāhmaṇas*.

One who can ascertain the forefathers of his family beginning from Lord Brahmā without any break, who can confirm that they have all properly undergone the ten purificatory processes, who can prove that there was never any intercaste marriages in his family, and who can establish that before each pregnancy the appropriate *saṁskāras* have been performed—he is a seminal *brāhmaṇa*. The Vedic statement *aṣṭa-varṣaṁ brāhmaṇam upanayita*—“a *brāhmaṇa* boy should be brought to an *ācārya* for sacred thread ceremony at the age of eight” and the *smṛti* statement *garbhāṣṭame 'bde kurvīta brāhmaṇasyopanayanam*—“a *brāhmaṇa* should be awarded the sacred thread at the age of eight” refer only to the above-mentioned *brāhmaṇas*, not to the sons of *brāhmaṇas* who have been accepted as *brāhmaṇas* only from a few generations. In other words, it does not refer to those in whose family an intercaste marriage took place, to those who have undergone *garbhādhāna-saṁskāra* only once, or to those who have improperly or imperfectly undergone *saṁskāras*. “*Brāhmaṇas* from a few generations” means either the descendants of those who have taken birth in other *varṇas* yet qualified themselves as *brāhmaṇas* or those who were qualified *brāhmaṇas* according to the process mentioned in the Vedic literatures. Just as the Gārgya *brāhmaṇas* were descendants of Śini, the son of Garga; the Maudgalya *brāhmaṇas* were descendants of Mudgala; the Vāśiṣṭha *brāhmaṇas* were descendants of sage Vāśiṣṭha, the son of Mitra from

the womb of Urvaśī; and so on—innumerable such *brāhmaṇa* families, though not *śaukra brāhmaṇas*, will remain glorified as *brāhmaṇas* as long as they continue to remain qualified, which is the root foundation of brahmanism.

**One's position as a *brāhmaṇa* is determined
according to the *Vedas* and the *Pañcarātras*.**

If the descendants of either seminal or professional *brāhmaṇas* do not possess the necessary qualifications, then they are also fallen. It is stated in *Mahābhārata*, *Vana-parva*, Chapter 215 as follows:

brāhmaṇaḥ patanīyeṣu vartamāno vikarmasu
dāmbhiko duṣkṛtaḥ prājñāḥ śūdreṇa sadṛśo bhavet

“If a *brāhmaṇa* is engaged in sinful activities, if he is proud, or if he is a miscreant, then he falls to the level of a *śūdra*.” According to this statement from the scriptures it is difficult in this age of Kali to ascertain who is in a pure unbroken seminal *brāhmaṇa* line and who is not. Therefore, through the ascending process it is very uncommon to identify a real twice-born or thrice-born. But those who receive the knowledge of serving the transcendental Lord through the process of disciplic succession and follow the Vedic injunctions, they are becoming qualified to undergo the *saṁskāras* mentioned in the Vedic literatures. In this age of Kali, there is no other way of becoming purified.

aśuddhāḥ śūdra-kalpā hi brāhmaṇāḥ kali-sambhavāḥ
teṣāṁ āgama-mārgeṇa śuddhir na śrota-vartmanā

“The *brāhmaṇas* born in the age of Kali are merely *śūdras*. Their so-called Vedic path of karma is polluted and cannot purify them. They can only be purified by following the path of the *Āgamas* or *Pañcarātras*.” Therefore, at present, a *brāhmaṇa* should be accepted as such only if he follows the rules and regulations of the *sātvata-āgamas*, *tantras*, or *Pañcarātras*, since the scriptures clearly mention that *brāhmaṇas* born in this age of Kali are impure, or their purity is not maintained through seminal descent. Therefore according to Vedic injunctions, they cannot even become twice-born in their impure state, and what to speak of becoming thrice-born.

**Necessity of the sacred thread ceremony
after receiving *pāñcarātrika* initiation.**

According to the process of Vaiṣṇava literatures in pursuance of the *Vedas*, an impure person can become pure only by spiritual initiation; there cannot be any other arrangement for purification. It does not matter in which family one is born, either in a so-called *brāhmaṇa* family or a lower family, if he wants to be purified in this age of Kali then he should earn his qualification to be twice-born by first being initiated according to the rules and regulations of the Vedic *Pañcarātras* and thereafter accept the signs of a twice-born. It is stated in the scriptures:

yathā kāñcanatām yāti kāmasyaṁ rasa-vidhānataḥ
tathā dīkṣā-vidhānena dvijatvaṁ jāyate nṛṇāṁ

“As bell metal is turned to gold when mixed with mercury in an alchemical process, so one who is properly trained and initiated by a bona fide spiritual master immediately becomes a *brāhmaṇa*.” Every human being must take Vaiṣṇava

initiation according to the proper Vedic *Pañcarātra* process, then he becomes a qualified twice-born, who must then accept the appropriate signs such as the sacred thread.

Those who consider *paramahamsas*, who are eternally pure and beyond the principles of *varṇāśrama*, as belonging to a particular caste have a hellish mentality.

The *paramahamsas*, who are actually eternally perfect pure souls, are beyond the principles of *varṇāśrama*. They need not again purify themselves. Therefore they may also not accept the sacred thread. This does not mean, however, that they are in any way less than a thrice-born. They are the spiritual masters of the *brāhmaṇas*, and the *brāhmaṇas* are their servants.

The four *varṇas* were created according to quality and work, and examples of twice-borns who were properly initiated.

In ancient times there was only one *varṇa* called *hamsa*. Later on, according to qualities and work, the four *varṇas* were created—there were not four *varṇas* in the beginning. Of course, there is a gulf of difference between the four *varṇas* and their respective qualifications. Intelligent people should carefully consider this. Apart from the four *varṇas* created by the Lord, the system of a son's purely inheriting the *varṇa* of his father has also been accepted. This is called seminal *varṇa*. But every reader of the scriptures knows that the seminal process is not the only way of ascertaining one's *varṇa*. He certainly knows that among the one hundred sons of Ṛṣabhadeva, eighty-one of them became *brāhmaṇas*, nine of them became *kṣatriyas*, and nine became Vaiṣṇavas. Apart from *brāhmaṇa* sons such as Śaunaka, Gr̥tsamada also had *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* and *śūdra* sons. The sons of the *kṣatriya* Duritakṣaya—Trayyāruṇi, Kavi, and Puṣkarāruṇi—became *brāhmaṇas*. In the dynasty of King Ajamīḍha, the *brāhmaṇa* Priyamedhā was born. There are hundreds of such examples in the scriptures. Though Śaṭhakopa Dāsa, the spiritual master of Śrī Śrī Rāmānujācārya Prabhu, was born in the family of a *śūdra*, he was a *brāhmaṇa*. And in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava society, in the families of Śrīla Rasikānanda Prabhu, Śrīla Raghunandana, Śrī Hari Hoḍa, and others, performance of the twice-born *samskāra* is still current. This spiritual position of *brāhmaṇas*, attained through spiritual initiation, has been accepted by intelligent people from time immemorial. There is no need to be surprised by seeing or hearing this. (Weekly *Gauḍīya*, Vol.1, Part 28)

Vaiṣṇave jāti-buddhi

Although Brahman, Paramātmā,
and Bhagavān are one nondual substance,
the materialists maintain misconceptions.

Śrī Vyāsadeva has said: *agni sūrya brāhmaṇebhyas tejyān vaiṣṇavaḥ sadā*.—“A Vaiṣṇava is always more powerful than the fire, the sun, or the *brāhmaṇas*.” Many people present false arguments on this statement and create various philosophies. Ignorance is the root cause of such mistakes or faults. The *brāhmaṇas*, yogis, and

Vaiṣṇavas are all servants of the *advaya-jñāna*, or nondual substance. This is accepted by all learned knowers of the truth. So many people will not be able to understand the above statement that a Vaiṣṇava is more powerful than a *brāhmaṇa* or a yogi. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī Prabhu has instructed in his *Ṣaṭ-sandarbhā* that although Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān are one nondual substance, many people are confused about the usage of the word *bhāgavata* in place of Brahman, as the word Brahman is distinct from the word *bhāgavata* from the ignorant point of view. Whenever materialists try to separate the noun from its adjectives while considering Brahman and Paramātmā, false arguments immediately lead them to the kingdom of misconceptions. The meaning of the word Brahman that creates differentiation with the word *bhāgavata* in this qualitative world certainly lacks the consideration of the nondual substance. The considerations of material variegatedness and nonvariegatedness create mixed feelings in spiritual consciousness. The prominence of the inferiority of Brahman and partiality of Paramātmā in considerations of the unadulterated, pure spiritual object more or less destroys the conception of a nondual substance.

**Transcendental philosophers attain
the platform of liberation while considering
the constitutional position of the Vaiṣṇavas.**

Who is a Vaiṣṇava? This consideration creates different conceptions in the discriminating vision of the philosopher and points towards the existence of one's original constitutional position in the equal vision of the philosopher. There cannot be any tinge of matter in the realization of spiritual variegatedness or in the constitutional position and vision of the seer. Whenever there is an attempt of attributing matter on spirit, it should be known for certain that spiritual nature has been attacked by envy in the form of matter. When the material attachment of the sense gratifiers become very prominent in their pure hearts, then they become very proud as non-Vaiṣṇavas. This is due to their material absorption, which is unrelated to God, and it simply causes fear.

It is stated in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*: *muktir hitvānyathā-rūpaṁ svarūpeṇa vyavasthitiḥ*—“*Mukti*, or the philosopher's liberation, means giving up all other activities and being situated in one's constitutional position (*svarūpeṇa vyavasthitiḥ*). When a philosopher is conditioned by sensual knowledge, then material vision will distract him from the truth. But if transcendental sound vibration enters his earholes, he will be freed from the contamination of mundane sound vibrations. The contamination of mundane sound is simply under the control of the eyes, nose, tongue, touch, and their leader, the mind. Since these five senses and their aggregate, the mind, are eligible for being conditioned by material conceptions, they are indifferent to inclination towards God, which is the eternal constitutional duty of the living entities. In other words, by misusing his sensual propensities a living entity cannot achieve eternal benefit. If one is entangled in unwanted desires, he will not understand the activities and characteristics of the Vaiṣṇavas, no matter how intelligent he may be. Then the conditioned soul falls into misconceptions and forgets his constitutional position. As a result, various proposals and ideas make him wander in the environment of the false ego. By the mercy of either Kṛṣṇa or His devotees, transcendental sound vibration makes friendship with a genuine desire for *sādhana*. In such a condition

a living entity realizes his own constitutional position and experiences the difference between pure *sanātana-dharma* and other *dharma*'s born of envy.

**The materialists and the Māyāvādīs
are unable to understand the transcendental
holy names, the Lord, and the Vaiṣṇavas.**

For those who consider the body and mind as nondifferent from the soul, there is no possibility of awakening transcendental knowledge. That is why they do not take shelter of the holy names of the Lord, which are nondifferent from the Lord, and therefore their material senses, which are the source of material disease, whimsically create temporary illusions in their minds. Only the transcendental holy names of the Lord can cure them from their disease.

Those who have taken shelter of the Supreme Lord no longer remain servants of temporary ignorance and unhappiness. But the mentality of 'I am a servant of *māyā*' captures the taste of conditioned souls and guides them to the path of either karma or *jñāna*. One who is freed from this can recognize a Vaiṣṇava. The material enjoyers and the Māyāvādīs are forever unable to recognize a Vaiṣṇava.

**An offender who commits offences against
the holy names and the Vaiṣṇavas is fit for atonement.**

Without realizing their constitutional position, many people who are averse to the Lord consider that the most worshipable Śrī Jhaḍu Ṭhākura belonged to the farmer class, consider Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, the son of Hāḍo Ojhā as a simple *brāhmaṇa* from Mithila, and consider Śrī Haridāsa Ṭhākura as an outcaste. In this way they commit offences at the lotus feet of Śrī Viṣṇu and the Vaiṣṇavas. Actually offences are not less grievous than sinful activities. To transgress temporary worldly moralities is called sin, and to deviate from spiritual moralities is called offence. To commit offence is an eternal fault. There is no alternative to become free from offences against the holy names and the Vaiṣṇavas other than service to the Vaiṣṇavas. The mentality of the offender of Vaiṣṇavas does not allow him to worship the Vaiṣṇavas but rather creates misconceptions that Vaiṣṇavas belong to a particular caste. That is why learned scholars say that materialists consider Vaiṣṇavas as non-Vaiṣṇavas like themselves and try to bring them on their level. Then they become proper candidates for atonement, otherwise, according to *smṛti* literature, they will certainly live in hell

**A well-behaved Vaiṣṇava engaged
in devotional service and following *sanātana-dharma*
is a qualified judge of spiritual *varṇāśrama*.**

Only a Vaiṣṇava is a qualified judge for considering a person's spiritual *varṇāśrama* status, because he is not infected by the four defects of life, such as to commit mistakes, to be illusioned, to cheat others, and to possess imperfect senses. Moreover, having heard the transcendental sound vibration, he regrets the misfortune of those who have not, so he specifically prays to Kṛṣṇa to bless such people.

mātur agre 'dhi-jananam dvitīyaṁ mauñjibandhane
tṛtīyaṁ yajña-dīkṣāyām dvijasya śruti-codanāt

The offenders who neglect the above-mentioned statement of the *smṛti* can never understand the subject matter of the three types of birth, beginning with seminal birth. They are always ready to insult the Vaiṣṇavas with their duplicitous nature, and as soon as they happen to hear the statements of the scriptures they feel embarrassed. The *adaiva-varṇāśrama* system established by the puffed-up pseudo *smārtas* is not accepted either by the *daiva-varṇāśrama* system or by the religious scriptures. Those who have not studied the *Gauḍīya* magazine in the last few years may due to their duplicitous nature loudly call for establishing the *adaiva-varṇāśrama* system, but in reply to this, the servants of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, who are engaged in devotional service and followers of pure *sanātana-dharma*, will point out their immature considerations and try hard to bring them back on the proper path.

The *Pañcarātras* and *smṛti-śāstras* such as the *Purāṇas* accept the changing of *varṇas* and *āśramas*.

A Vaiṣṇava may live at home, yet he is able to carry out his spiritual duties. Although the materialistic followers of the *adaiva-varṇāśrama* system cannot understand this fact, *Śrī Mahābhārata* and *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* will gradually help them understand these topics. The Vaiṣṇava *Pañcarātra* literatures and the *smṛti* literatures such as the *Purāṇas* accept the changing of one's *varṇa* and *āśrama* during one's life. The childish mentality exhibited by followers of the *adaiva-varṇāśrama* system who pursue the *nagna-mātrkā* logic⁹, simply displays their foolishness and weakness of heart. The feeble thoughts of the followers of the *adaiva-varṇāśrama* system simply make them unsocial narrow-minded people.

Envious people who are devoid of devotional service are naturally fools and ill-behaved.

The disciples of those who repeatedly try to create disturbances and are envious of Śrī Māyāpur, the abode of the Supreme Lord, are fond of false arguments and display their poverty with their ancient language. As long as these people maintain their envious nature, they will not understand the characteristics of devotional service. The most worshipable Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī Prabhu has addressed these people, who are devoid of devotional service, as fools and sinners. A hypocrite can never recognize a Vaiṣṇava. Therefore it is said:

arcye viṣṇau śilā-dhīr guruṣu nara-matir vaiṣṇave jāti-buddhir

viṣṇau sarveśvareṣe tad-itara-sama-dhīr yasya vā nārakī saḥ

“One who considers the *arcā-mūrti* (the worshipable Deity of Lord Viṣṇu) to be stone, the spiritual master to be an ordinary human being, a Vaiṣṇava to belong to a particular creed, or Lord Viṣṇu, who is the supreme controller, as equal to the demigods is possessed of hellish intelligence.” This statement of the *smṛti* spoken by Śrī Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vyāsadeva should constantly be considered by such people. (Weekly *Gauḍīya*, Vol.11, Part 17 and *Śrī Gauḍīya Patrika*, Vol.13, Part 2)

Mundane śudras are not Vaiṣṇavas

The difference between Śrī Gaura Bhagavān's

spiritual world and material world

Lord Śrī Gaura has two kingdoms—the first consists of His eternal abodes such as Vaikuṇṭha and Goloka and the second consists of the *brahmāṇḍas*, or universes, known as Devī-dhāma. The existence of the Vaikuṇṭha abodes are beyond the material creation, in other words, they are situated in the spiritual kingdom. The material time factor has no entry into that realm, material qualities have no access there, and the condemned lusty activities of the conditioned souls have no jurisdiction there. In the heavenly planets of this material world one finds the interactions of the material modes of nature, the enjoyment of the results of one's karma, and absence of love of Kṛṣṇa. Lord Śrī Gaura creates the eternally manifested Vaikuṇṭhas and perishable *brahmāṇḍas* through Mahā-Viṣṇu, who lies down on the Causal Ocean, and who is a plenary portion of Saṅkarsaṇa, who resides in Mahā-Vaikuṇṭha, and who is a manifestation of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, who is an expansion of Śrī Gaura. Since Mahā-Viṣṇu, who lies on the Causal Ocean, creates perishable *brahmāṇḍas*, nobody should consider Vaikuṇṭha as similar to Devī-dhāma. The *brahmāṇḍas* are material worlds and under the jurisdiction of the time factor. But the Vaikuṇṭhas are spiritual and beyond the material time.

In the spiritual world there are no *śūdras*.

There is no eternal gross existence of the different *varṇas* such as *brāhmaṇas* and *kṣatriyas* in the spiritual world, rather they exist only in the form of expression. It is not that because in this material world we can see the temporary existence of *brāhmaṇas* and *kṣatriyas* that there have to be *śūdras* in the spiritual world. The non-Vaiṣṇava sect of *prākṛta-sahajiyās* think that the gross existence of the temporary identification as *śūdras* in this material world helps one enter into the spiritual kingdom, so they disrespect the *brāhmaṇas* of this material kingdom.

The *sahajiyās* are faultfinders, *śūdras*, and sinful; hence they are non-Vaiṣṇavas.

People condemn the *sahajiyās* because they do not respect the *brāhmaṇas*. Since they disregard the *brāhmaṇas*, they naturally consider them non-*brāhmaṇas* or devoid of good qualities. While travelling throughout the universes, condition souls engage in various sinful activities and thus lose their worldly prestige. Due to their past misdeeds, sinful people become maddened by the pride of being *śūdras*. By the influence of previous pious activities the condition soul becomes prestigious as a qualified *brāhmaṇa*. Because the mundane *sahajiyās* are sinful-minded, they love to address and hate the Vaiṣṇavas as *śūdras*; they indirectly call them sinful and claim that a *śūdra* cannot become a Vaiṣṇava. The *sahajiyās* do not believe that all great qualities are present in a Vaiṣṇava, so they think that they will be benefited by being attached to sinful activities.

Only the *brāhmaṇas* are qualified to become Vaiṣṇavas, not others.

When the *brāhmaṇas*, who are situated in the mode of goodness in this material kingdom, give up their relationship with other mixed qualities, then they become transcendental to all the material modes of nature. At that point he is situated in pure goodness and becomes a Vaiṣṇava with twenty-six qualities. When a

brāhmaṇa gives up his authority for performing fruitive activities and the desire for accepting *dakṣiṇa* contributions, then his propensity for being a servant of Lord Viṣṇu is awakened. He then surpasses the kingdom of *māyā*, where Lord Viṣṇu is not always seen, and after achieving the lotus feet of Lord Viṣṇu in the spiritual world, which is devoid of material enjoyment, he cultivates devotional service.

The *brāhmaṇas* are situated in the mode of goodness; the *śūdras* are covered with ignorance and are sinful.

As long as the living entity thinks that becoming a *śūdra* is the basis for serving Viṣṇu, he considers himself fallen and sinful; and by serving material objects, he considers that non-Vaiṣṇavism, which is devoid of service to Hari, is Vaiṣṇavism. The living entities who are covered by the mode of ignorance are *śūdras*, and the living entities who are situated in the mode of goodness are *brāhmaṇas*. The sinful *śūdras* can never serve Lord Viṣṇu with their sinful ingredients. Even a pious, ambitious *brāhmaṇa* who is situated in the mode of mixed goodness and absorbed in matter cannot serve Lord Viṣṇu. That is why a person who is proud of his *varṇa* is not qualified to serve Lord Viṣṇu.

**The process of becoming a Vaiṣṇava,
or servant of Hari.**

When one rejects the pride arising from being a proper follower of the system of *varṇāśrama*, he becomes eligible for the transcendental service of Lord Hari. Unless a *śūdra* gives up his sinful nature he cannot become a Vaiṣṇava, and unless a *brāhmaṇa* gives up his pious fruitive activities with his body, mind, and speech he cannot become a Vaiṣṇava. The Supreme Lord has said in *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.13) as follows: *cātur-varṇyam mayā sṛṣṭam guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśaḥ*. The Lord has created the four *varṇas* according to their qualities and activities. Until the indulgence in material qualities is not diminished by the propensity for serving Lord Hari, a living entity continues to perform fruitive activities. In other words, he continues to wander in the kingdom of material enjoyment. If a person who is situated in the principles of *varṇāśrama* serves Lord Hari while maintaining the pride of being a *brāhmaṇa*, there is no possibility of his attaining unalloyed devotional service to Lord Hari. Then the living entity engages in devotional service mixed with fruitive activities. Then the *brāhmaṇa* engaged in devotional service mixed with karma becomes qualified to possess the twenty-six qualities of a Vaiṣṇava and be identified as a Vaiṣṇava in this world. But when he begins to worship Hari without fruitive desires, then he achieves pure devotional service.

**Examples showing a Vaiṣṇava is not a *śūdra*;
he is the spiritual master of the *brāhmaṇas*.**

Many ambitious *brāhmaṇas* who have taken shelter of devotional service mixed with fruitive activities dare to attribute the abomination of caste upon pure Vaiṣṇavas like Haridāsa Ṭhākura, Uddhāraṇa Datta Ṭhākura, Narahari Sarakāra Ṭhākura, Navanī Hoḍa Ṭhākura, and Śyamānanda Prabhu. Moreover, fruitive *brāhmaṇas* who became Vaiṣṇavas like Gaṅgānārāyaṇa Cakravartī, Rāmakṛṣṇa Bhaṭṭācārya, and Yadunandana Cakravartī have taken shelter of the glorious lotus feet of the servants of Hari and thus established that the Vaiṣṇavas are transcendental ideals for the *brāhmaṇas*. If a Vaiṣṇava were a *śūdra* or sinful, then

Śrīla Ṭhākura Narahari, Śrīla Ṭhākura Narottama, Śrīla Śyāmānanda Prabhu, Śrīla Rasikānanda Prabhu, Śrīla Ṭhākura Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, and Śrīla Gosvāmī Raghunātha Dāsa would never be adored as spiritual masters of many *brāhmaṇas* engaged in devotional service mixed with fruitive activities.

**According to social and scriptural opinion,
a non-*brāhmaṇa* is unqualified for serving Hari.**

As soon as we give the mentality of a *śūdra* or ambitious *brāhmaṇa*, then we will not see any discrimination in the sinful or pious caste of Vaiṣṇavas who give and accept the devotional service of Hari. Otherwise, why are we so eager to classify the Vaiṣṇavas as *śūdras* (without *saṁskāras*) while performing devotion service mixed with fruitive activities meant for some irrelevant purpose. The *śāstras*, the religious principles, and society say that other than *brāhmaṇas* no other *varṇa* has the right to serve the Absolute Truth. That is why the ambitious *brāhmaṇas* who maintain irrelevant desires have a propensity to hate Vaiṣṇavas as *śūdras*. They do not even hesitate to say that the Vaiṣṇavas have no alternative but to become *śūdras* because of sinful activities. But this type of consideration is the main obstacle for serving the servants of Hari. Unless one gives up unfavorable considerations, he can not make advancement in the path of devotional service. (*Sajjana-toṣaṇī*, No. 20)

The seminal *brāhmaṇa*

**The symptoms of a *brāhmaṇa*
described in *Vajra-sūcikopaniṣad*.**

The names of 108 *Upaniṣads* are mentioned in the *Muktikopaniṣad*. Among them, the thirty-sixth *Upaniṣad* is called *Vajra-sūcikopaniṣad*. It is said that Śrī Śaṅkarācārya composed an elaborate commentary on this *Upaniṣad* and thus became very famous. It is described in *Vajra-sūcika-śruti* as follows:

*tarhi ko vā brāhmaṇo nāma. yaḥ kaścīd ātmānaṁ advitīyaṁ jāti-guṇa-kriyā-hīnaṁ
ṣaḍ-ūrmi-ṣaḍ-bhāvety-ādi-sarva-doṣa-rahitaṁ satya-jñānānandānanta-svarūpaṁ
svayaṁ nirvikalpaṁ aśeṣa-kalpādhāraṁ aśeṣa-bhūtāntar-yāmitvena vartamānaṁ
antar bahiḥ cākāṣa-vad anusyūtaṁ akhaṇḍānanda-svabhāvaṁ apremeyaṁ
anubhavaika-vedyaṁ aparokṣatayā bhāsamānaṁ kara-talāmalaka-vat sākṣād
aparokṣi-kṛtya kṛtārthatayā kāma-rāgādi-doṣa-rahitaḥ śama-damādi-sampanno
bhāva-mātsarya-trṣṇāśā-mohādi-rahito dambhāhaṅkāradibhir asaṁspṛṣṭa cetā
vartate. evaṁ ukta-lakṣaṇo yaḥ sa eva brāhmaṇa iti śruti-smṛti-purāṇetiḥāsānām
abhiprāyaḥ. anyathā hi brāhmaṇatva-siddhir nāsty eva.*

“Then who is the *brāhmaṇa*? Anyone who knows the Self as one; devoid of mundane caste, qualities, and activities; devoid of contamination by the six enemies (lust, anger, greed, illusion, pride, and envy) and the six waves (distress, illusion, hunger, thirst, old age, and death); the personification of transcendental knowledge and bliss; beyond duality, yet the basis of all material dualities; the Supersoul of all living entities; all-pervading inside and outside like the vast sky; endowed with uninterrupted bliss; immeasurable; known only through spiritual realization; and directly self-manifesting—one who directly realizes the Self (as one sees an *āmlakī* fruit in the palm of his hand), who lives always satisfied, devoid

of faults like lust and anger, who possesses qualities like peacefulness and self-control, who is devoid of envy, the thirst for material enjoyment, illusion, and other faults, and who is untouched by pride, false ego, and so on—such a person is a *brāhmaṇa*. This is also the opinion of the *śrutis*, *smṛtis*, *Itihāsas*, *Purāṇas*, and other scriptures. Otherwise one cannot be a real *brāhmaṇa*.”

**Questions put forth by the *brāhmaṇa* community
of East Bengal (Bangladesh), who are opposed to
and violators of the Vedic injunctions.**

Violating the above statement of the *śruti* and with a desire to propagate philosophy averse to the *Vedas*, the *brāhmaṇa* community of East Bengal put forward a question through their representatives, the caste Gosvāmīs, in the month of October in the city of Dhaka. They requested an answer from the Śrī Madhva Gauḍīya Maṭha of Dhaka, but what to speak of hearing the answer, the way they misbehaved was condemned in the *Gauḍīya* magazine. Since many people requested a serial presentation of this criticism, we are publishing the following article.

The questions of the caste Gosvāmīs who are averse to the devotional service of Lord Viṣṇu and are harassed by the *smārta* community are as follows: “A *brāhmaṇa* boy should be brought for undergoing the sacred thread ceremony at the age of eight.’ What is the meaning of the word *brāhmaṇa* mentioned in this Vedic statement? Does it refer to the caste *brāhmaṇas* who study the *Vedas* and perform austerities, or simply to those who are born in the family of *brāhmaṇas*, the seminal *brāhmaṇas*?”

The answers of the spiritual *brāhmaṇas* from Śrī Madhva Gauḍīya Maṭha are as follows: “If one accepts persons who have undergone various austerities as *brāhmaṇas*, then it will certainly be improper, because they are devoid of qualities like knowing past, present, and future, they possess gross vision, they lack transcendental qualities, and they are unable to ascertain the truth because they take support of *pratyakṣa* and *anumāna* as evidence rather than transcendental sound. Therefore they are unqualified to be addressed as *brāhmaṇas*, and they are unfit for the sacred thread ceremony, because they do not possess the appropriate qualifications. In answer to the second question, qualities like austerity arise after the study of the scriptures, therefore the position of a *brāhmaṇa* is dependent both on the study of the scriptures and undergoing austerities, which are not possible at the age of eight. So undergoing the sacred thread ceremony at the age of eight is not improper, rather it is proper. Therefore one should accept our authorized path.”

By their questions, the seminal *brāhmaṇas* are trying to establish that they are the real *brāhmaṇas*.

**The caste Gosvāmīs and their descendents
are unable to accept the considerations of
the *śrutis*, *smṛtis*, and *Purāṇas*.**

In *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.13) the Supreme Lord as said: *cātur-varṇyam mayā sṛṣṭam guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśaḥ*—“According to the three modes of material nature and the work associated with them, the four divisions of human society are created by Me.” And the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.5.2) states:

mukha-bāhūru-pādebhyaḥ puruṣasyāśramaiḥ saha
catvāro jajñire varṇā guṇair viprādayaḥ pṛthak

“Each of the four social orders, headed by the *brāhmaṇas*, was born through different combinations of the modes of nature, from the face, arms, thighs and feet of the Supreme Lord in His universal form. Thus the four spiritual orders were also generated.” The caste Gosvāmīs and their caretakers, the *smārta* community, who are situated in the perverted *varṇāśrama* system, are not ready to accept these statements of *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Bhāgavatam* with proper consideration. We will gradually and elaborately discuss the value of their considerations. But first of all we would like to say that they do not accept the *smṛtis* and the *Purāṇas*, which are in pursuance of the *śruti*. Therefore, being unable to accept the real meaning of the *Vedas*, they create confusion which in turn produces further disturbances. The rules for the sacred thread ceremony found in the fourth *khaṇḍa*, fourth *prapāṭhaka* of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* of *Sāma Veda* mentions that a boy should be awarded the sacred thread between the age of eight and sixteen years. Apart from that, the procedure for the sacred thread ceremony at other times is also found.

The Vedic fruitive workers do not agree to award the sacred thread to a fallen boy who has crossed the age of sixteen without undergoing the enjoined ceremony. But the mental speculators and the devotees reject the ideas of the fruitive workers and follow other branches of the *Vedas*. The fruitive workers, who follow the indirect path, are unable to realize transcendence knowledge and the service of the transcendental Lord. That is why they cannot imagine that the Vedic literatures teach one to become detached from fruitive activities and aspire for the ultimate goal of one's constitutional propensities. Their only asset is their seminal brahmanism.

**The *Vedas*, the branches of the *Vedas*,
and the *Kalpa-śāstras* approve the system of Vedic *tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa* and the
wearing of saffron cloth.**

It is stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*: *na buddhi-bhedaṁ janayed ajñānām karma-saṅginām*—“Let not the wise disrupt the minds of the ignorant who are attached to fruitive action.” The different branches of the *Vedas* are nondifferent from the *Vedas*. Calculation of years and so on and conceptions of time are included in the *Kalpa-śāstras*, which are part of the Vedic branch of astrological knowledge. In different branches of the *Vedas* there are various subbranches of *Kalpa-śāstras* and *Jyotiṣa-śāstras*. A particular branch of fruitive activities nourishes various conceptions of the innumerable branches of the *Vedas*. An arrangement for wearing saffron cloth is found in the *Vājasaneyā Kātyāyana Gṛhya-sūtra* of the *Kalpa-śāstras* while ascertaining one's dress. In other *Kalpa-śāstras* of the *Ekāyana* branch of the *Vedas*, however, the wearing of saffron robes has been forbidden. One branch of Vedic knowledge does not reject another branch of knowledge, rather it respects it. The seminal method is not the only method for ascertaining who is a *brāhmaṇa*. These topics are elaborately described in *Kāśmīr-āgama*. The arguments presented by Apayya Dīkṣita out of disrespect for Śrī Yamunācārya, the king of Vaiṣṇavas, without understanding the teachings of the *Ekāyana* branch, are extremely insignificant. Apayya Dīkṣita was simply an atheistic scholar attached to false arguments. He was against the Vedic *tridaṇḍa* system and was unsuccessful in

establishing that the devotees were non-*brāhmaṇas*. Śrī Puruṣottama Mahārāja, a follower of the Vallabhācārya-sampradāya, has properly punished him for the mischief that he displayed in his *Kalpataru-parimala* commentary on Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's *Śārīraka-bhāṣya* on the *Vedānta-sūtras*. If one patiently analyzes this, he will never desire to call the initiated Vaiṣṇavas “non-*brāhmaṇas*.” Due to absence of third birth, or spiritual initiation, the twice-born consider that the platform of *sāvitra-janma* is the highest. As a result, they even fall down from that platform of *sāvitra* due to disregarding great souls. The Vaiṣṇava *brāhmaṇas* of the *Ekāyana* branch are not seminal *brāhmaṇas* as the ignorant people consider, rather they are sons of Lord Viṣṇu.

The ambitious seminal *brāhmaṇas* are fruitive workers, yet averse to the seminal process of the *Sāma Veda*.

Generally there are two opinions. Being devoid of devotion to Viṣṇu, persons who belong to Brahman's material existence identify themselves as ambitious seminal *brāhmaṇas* and undergo ten types of fruitive *saṁskāras*. Though the sons of Viṣṇu undergo *saṁskāras* according to *Vājasaneyā Kātyāyana Gṛhya-sūtras*, they do not become entangled in fruitive activities.

The Madhva Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas have no objection against those who try to establish the system of seminal brahmanism, but their only concern is that the seminal process should not be polluted. Those who after duly undergoing the sacred thread ceremony in the seminal line violate and reject the *smṛti* injunctions regarding *saṁskāras* simply distort the very seminal process. The Madhva Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas quote the following verse from Bhārgavīya *Manu-saṁhitā*:

yo 'nadhītya dvijo vedam sa jīvan eva śūdratvam	anyatra kurute śramam āśu gacchati sāvayam
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“A *brāhmaṇa* who gives up the study of the *Vedas* to labor hard for other things becomes a *śūdra* in this very life along with all his family members.” How can one undergo the sacred thread *saṁskāra* by deviating from this instruction? If the seminal process is the criteria for a *brāhmaṇa* to undergo the sacred thread *saṁskāra*, then why did the *Sāma Veda* document the tradition of undergoing the sacred thread *saṁskāra* while rejecting the seminal process?

The seminal *brāhmaṇas* who follow the ascending process are averse to the *Vedas*.

The Madhva Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas clearly know and do not deny that the twenty *Dharma-śāstras* and a few *Kalpa-sūtras* support the process of the seminal *brāhmaṇas*' sacred thread ceremony, therefore they know that these seminal *brāhmaṇas* who follow the ascending process as averse to the *Vedas* because they transgress the qualities, activities, occupations, symptoms, and natures of candidates for the sacred thread. In our next article we will discuss how insignificant is the endeavor of the seminal communities, who disregard the qualities and occupation of a candidate. (Weekly *Gauḍīya*, Vol.1, Part 29)

Brahmanism and Vaiṣṇavism

(by Śrīla Sac-cid-ānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura)

Brahmanism is a step towards Vaiṣṇavism.

Many people think that brahmanism and Vaiṣṇavism are two different things. From this belief, some foolish people who are partial to Vaiṣṇavas criticize the *brāhmaṇas*. And some, who are partial to *brāhmaṇas*, criticize the Vaiṣṇavas. But persons who know the science of the scriptures do not approve of this. They say that brahmanism is a stage or qualification of a Vaiṣṇava and Vaiṣṇavism is the fruit of brahmanism.

Śrī Mahāprabhu has said:

*sahaje nirmala ei `brāhmaṇa'-hṛdaya
kṛṣṇera vasite ei yogya-sthāna haya*

*`mātsarya'-caṇḍāla kene ihāṇ vasāile
parama pavitra sthāna apavitra kaile*

“The heart of a *brāhmaṇa* is by nature very clean; therefore it is a proper place for Kṛṣṇa to sit. Why have you allowed jealousy to sit here also? Because of this, you have become like a *caṇḍāla*, the lowest of men, and you have also contaminated a most purified place—your heart.” The sanctified heart of the living entity is called brahmanism. Devotional service to Kṛṣṇa resides in that sanctified heart.

Envy is opposite to love of God, and envious persons are not *brāhmaṇas*.

If envy, which is compared to a dog-eater, captures the sanctified heart of a living entity, then devotion to Kṛṣṇa disappears from his heart. Then he no longer remains a *brāhmaṇa*. To feel distressed by seeing other's happiness and to feel happiness by seeing other's distress is called envy. Envy and love are diametrically opposite. Wherever there is envy, there is no love; and wherever there is love, there is no envy. A nonenvious heart is the only identification of a *brāhmaṇa*. It is certainly the residence of love of God.

Symptoms of a *brāhmaṇa*.

The symptoms of a *brāhmaṇa* are described in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (7.11.21) as follows:

*śamo damas tapaḥ śaucaṁ santoṣaḥ kṣāntir ārjavam
jñānaṁ dayācyutātmatvaṁ satyaṁ ca brahma-lakṣaṇam*

“A *brāhmaṇa* must possess these eleven symptoms. One who does not possess peacefulness, self-control, austerity, purity, satisfaction, forgiveness, simplicity, knowledge, compassion, and devotion towards the Supreme Lord can not be called a *brāhmaṇa*.” In the heart of a *brāhmaṇa* with such qualities the science of Kṛṣṇa always shines brightly. One who does not have devotion to Kṛṣṇa is certainly not a *brāhmaṇa*.

The identification of a *brāhmaṇa* is only by qualities, not by caste.

Śrī Nārada Muni has stated in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (7.11.35) as follows:

yasya yal lakṣaṇaṁ proktaṁ puṁso varṇābhivyañjakam

yad anyatrāpi dṛśyeta tat tenaiva vinirdiśet

“If one shows the symptoms of being a *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* or *śūdra*, as described above, even if he has appeared in a different class, he should be accepted according to those symptoms of classification.”

In his commentary on this verse of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, Śrīdhara Svāmī Mahāśaya has stated: *śamādhībhīr eva brāhmaṇādi vyavahāro mukhyaḥ, na jāti mātṛād ity āha—yasyeti. yad yadi anyatra varṇāntare 'pi dṛśyeta tad varṇāntaram tenaiva lakṣaṇa nimittenaiva varṇena vinirdiśet, na tu jāti nimittenety arthaḥ*—“The *brāhmaṇas*' main characteristics are qualities such as peacefulness, not birth. If these main characteristics are seen in persons other than those born as *brāhmaṇas*, then such persons should be considered *brāhmaṇas*. They should not be considered according to their caste by birth.”

If we carefully analyze these statements of the Vaiṣṇava scriptures and *smṛtis*, such as *Manu-saṁhitā*, which are very helpful for maintaining one's worldly life, then we understand that there are two types of *brāhmaṇas*, namely ordinary *brāhmaṇas* and spiritual *brāhmaṇas*. Ordinary brahmanism is based on caste, and spiritual brahmanism is based on qualities.

**Unless one becomes a spiritual *brāhmaṇa*
he cannot become a Vaiṣṇava.**

The symptoms of a spiritual *brāhmaṇa* are mentioned in *Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* (3.9.10) as follows:

*etad akṣaram gārgy aviditvāsmāl lokāt praiti sa kṛpaṇaḥ
atha ya etad akṣaram gārgi viditvāsmāl lokāt praiti sa brāhmaṇaḥ*

“O daughter of Gargācārya, he who leaves this world without learning about the infallible Supreme is a *kṛpaṇa*, or miser. O Gārgi, one who is acquainted with that infallible truth by which one transcends death is a *brāhmaṇa*.”

There are ten kinds of ordinary activities like offering of oblations and funeral rites that are prescribed for the ordinary *brāhmaṇas*. It is written in the *smṛti* literature that by performing these activities an ordinary *brāhmaṇa* becomes prestigious.

Taking initiation, worshiping the Supreme Lord, accepting the renounced order of life, and observing vows for strengthening one's spiritual life are activities by which a spiritual *brāhmaṇa* is honored. Unless one achieves the platform of spiritual brahmanism, he cannot achieve the platform of Vaiṣṇavism.

It is stated in *Bṛhad-āranyaka* (4.4.21) in this regard as follows:

tam eva dhīro vijñāya prajñām kurvīta brāhmaṇaḥ

“A wise person who knows the Supreme Lord, Parabrahman, through the process of devotion, is a *brāhmaṇa*.”

A *brāhmaṇa* should aspire for knowledge of the relationship between matter, spirit, and the Supreme Lord. In other words, he should cultivate pure devotional service. After considering these conclusions of the scriptures, we can certainly understand that there is no difference between an advanced *brāhmaṇa* and a Vaiṣṇava. When a *brāhmaṇa*'s faith is awakened, his life becomes successful and he achieves devotion to the Lord.

There is no need to become a caste *brāhmaṇa*

in order to attain the Supreme Lord.

By seeing the example of Jaḍa Bharata many people doubt whether a low caste person who performs devotional service must be born in the family of a *brāhmaṇa* in order to achieve the goal of life. In this regard, we can always discuss the following conclusive statements of *Bhagavad-gītā*:

mām hi pārtha vyapāśritya ye 'pi syuḥ pāpa-yonayaḥ
striyo vaiśyās tathā śūdrās te 'pi yānti parām gatim

kim punar brāhmaṇāḥ puṇyā bhaktā rājarṣayas tathā
anityam asukhaṁ lokam imaṁ prāpya bhajasva mām

“O son of Prthā, those who take shelter in Me, though they be of lower birth—women, *vaiśyas* [merchants] and *śūdras* [workers]—can attain the supreme destination. How much more this is so of the righteous *brāhmaṇas*, the devotees and the saintly kings. Therefore, having come to this temporary, miserable world, engage in loving service unto Me.” Where is the doubt that if strong devotion for the Supreme Lord is awakened in the hearts of the *brāhmaṇas* and *kṣatriyas* that they will be delivered? Because even women, *vaiśyas*, *śūdras*, outcastes, and sinful *caṇḍālas* can attain the supreme destination by taking shelter of pure devotional service.

**By the influence of devotional service
one's position as an outcaste is destroyed
and he becomes a spiritual *brāhmaṇa*.**

If one understands the purport of the following two *Bhagavad-gītā* verses directly preceding those quoted above, then he will have no doubts whatsoever.

api cet su-durācāro bhajate mām ananya-bhāk
sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ samyag vyavasito hi saḥ

kṣipram bhavati dharmātmā śaśvac-chāntim nigacchati
kaunteya pratijānīhi na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati

The purport of these two verses are that living entities who become devotees or Vaiṣṇavas generally possess brahminical qualities. If by the strength of the association of devotees a person attains unalloyed devotional service before possessing the wealth of brahminical qualities, then he should also be accepted as a devotee. Because by My mercy he will soon become a pious soul. In other words, brahmanism, which is the right of a Vaiṣṇava, is attained by him as a concomitant fruit of devotional service. O son of Kuntī, such a person will never fall down in the form of taking rebirth, etc. This is My promise. I will bestow love of God by awarding him pure spiritual brahmanism in this life, without having to undergo atonement.

**The *brāhmaṇas* and the Vaiṣṇavas
are related as brothers.**

O readers, do not differentiate between brahmanism and Vaiṣṇavism. The *brāhmaṇas* are naturally qualified to become Vaiṣṇavas. That is why Lord Kṛṣṇa has displayed so much respect for the *brāhmaṇas* who are qualified for pure devotional service. If we receive the causeless mercy of the *brāhmaṇas*, we can

become pure. No one can become a Vaiṣṇava by disregarding the position of the *brāhmaṇas*, and a *brāhmaṇa* can never become successful by disregarding the position of the Vaiṣṇavas. Therefore let the natural brotherhood of the *brāhmaṇas* and Vaiṣṇavas shine brightly throughout the entire world. Do not let selfishness and foolishness enter between them and create enmity. In order to spread the prestige of the *brāhmaṇas* in this world Śrīman Mahāprabhu enacted the pastime of curing His fever by drinking the *caranāmṛta* of a *brāhmaṇa*. O *brāhmaṇas* (pure devotees), please be merciful to us.

The *varṇāśrama* of Vaiṣṇavas

**In order to protect *sanātana-dharma*,
the followers of the *varṇāśrama* principles need to follow the scriptural rules
and regulations.**

The Āryans of India who belong to the four *varṇas* are situated in four *āśramas*. The divisions of *āśramas* have been produced along with the divisions of *varṇas*. The principles of *varṇa* can be protected while remaining in any one of these four *āśramas*—*brahmacharya*, *gṛhastha*, *vānaprastha*, or *sannyāsa*. Those who belong to any of the *varṇas* must certainly belong to one of the *āśramas*. The principles of *varṇa* and *āśrama* are under the jurisdiction of social provisions. Those who desire some benefit and reputation from the social *varṇa* and *āśrama* system should wholeheartedly protect *sanātana-dharma* by following the ancient rules and regulations of those systems.

**Of the two propensities, *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti*,
those following the path of *nivṛtti* are on
the topmost platform of society.**

The social human beings have two propensities, both of which are beneficial to the society. The social Āryans have arranged various rules and regulations so that no enmity is created in society. The arrangements and behavior that are followed in order to fulfil this principle purpose simultaneously bestow many secondary fruits such as attainment of the heavenly planets and accumulation of piety. For persons who have fruitive propensities the *Dharma-śāstras* prescribe the performance of sacrifices, offering oblations to the forefathers, undergoing *saṁskāras*, observing vows, residing in holy places, and bathing in holy waters. And for persons who possess the propensity for mental speculation the *Dharma-śāstras* prescribe worshipping the demigods and *brāhmaṇas*, respecting elderly persons, and attaining knowledge. Those who give up self-happiness and oneness with Brahman, which are the goals of these two propensities, are on the topmost platform of society.

**Sectarian philosophers like the *karmīs*, *jñānīs*, and yogis, directly or indirectly
desire the welfare of society.**

While remaining in seclusion and eating foods cooked by *brāhmaṇas*, the dry mental speculators try to assist society in reaching its perfection. The yogis proclaim that happiness is possible by minimizing one's necessities and thus increase people's attachment for enjoying happiness born of renunciation. Other sectarian philosophers benefit the society endeavoring for happiness through their

manipulations and actions.

**The Vaiṣṇavas are beyond
the principles of *varṇāśrama*.**

Although the behavior of people who follow the *varṇāśrama* system is similar to that of Vaiṣṇavas, the Vaiṣṇavas do not consider that maintaining or benefiting society is their main purpose. They do not fill their hearts with the thought of making society prosperous or ruined by their actions. The Vaiṣṇavas are not busy in establishing their own reputation in the four *varṇas* and four *āśramas*. The Vaiṣṇava is not embarrassed if his actions violate the rules and regulations of the *varṇāśrama* system, because the only purpose of all his activities is to increase his devotion towards the Supreme Lord. It does not matter whether a Vaiṣṇava is a *brāhmaṇa*, *mleccha*, or *caṇḍāla*. Whether he is a householder or a renunciate, he has no honor or dishonor. If a Vaiṣṇava goes to hell or heaven for the sake of devotional service to the Lord, it is the same thing. The love of God he exhibits while meeting the Supreme Lord does not diminish at all in separation from Him. A Vaiṣṇava does not desire anything. He has no scarcity at all. One who is desirous of merging into Brahman is overwhelmed by the excellence of his unattained goal. When attained, his long cherished wonder in the form of Brahman becomes abominable. One who desires to become one with Brahman is very restless, being bound by material shackles. The Vaiṣṇavas, however, do not become impatient. Although the appearance and activities of Vaiṣṇavas appear to be like those of people who wish to enjoy the fruits of their karma, they are actually completely different.

**Unauthorized endeavor to make Vaiṣṇavas
subordinate to the *varṇāśrama* system.**

Many people think that there is no difference between Vaiṣṇavas and those who are inferior to the Vaiṣṇavas. Hence they often inquire about the Vaiṣṇava's *varṇa* and try to bury them in one of the four *āśramas* like the socialites. Yet this endeavor is a social endeavor and totally opposed to Vaiṣṇava culture. If we see the transcendental appearance pastimes of Śrī Gaurāṅga, who is the deliverer of the fallen souls and the only spiritual master of the whole world, then all our doubts will be vanquished. In the *Vedas*, which consist of spiritual knowledge, it is stated:

bhidyate hṛdaya-granthiś chidyante sarva-saṁśayāḥ
kṣīyante cāśya karmāṇi tasmin dr̥ṣṭe parāvare

“The knot in the heart is pierced, all misgivings are cut to pieces, and the chain of fruitive actions is terminated when one sees the Supreme Lord everywhere, within all superior and inferior beings.”

**Under the guidance of Śrī Gaurasundara, the Vaiṣṇavas are servants of Gopī-
jana-vallabha.**

If we see the characteristics of the Lord, then all our doubts are cleared, the reactions of karma are diminished and the knots of the heart are untied. Then one realizes the Absolute Truth. Even if the well-behaved *brāhmaṇas* who have undergone the ten *saṁskāras* attain the platform of Brahman, they cannot become

doubtless until they see the transcendental characteristics of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya.

The characteristics of Śrī Caitanya are fully spiritual. Anyone who has seen this knows that a Vaiṣṇava is neither a *brāhmaṇa*, a *kṣatriya*, a *vaiśya*, or a *śūdra*, nor a *brahmacārī*, *grhastha*, *vānaprastha*, or *sannyāsī*. He is different than all of these, a servant of the servant of the most dear friend of the *gopīs*. He has no other separate identification. The mundane conception of “I am great or tiny” does not touch him. A self-realized soul is unconcerned with temporary logics like “the sky in a pot,” “the vast sky,” and “the rope and the snake.”

The unauthorized interference in the authority of the Vaiṣṇavas by the *smārtas*, who are attached to fruitive activities, the *prākṛta-sahajiyās*, and the caste Gosvāmīs.

Some people nowadays have acted in a most non-Vaiṣṇava manner by trying to establish the word “Vaiṣṇava” as a social designation by attributing abominable and contrary meanings to it. It hurts me even to mention such behavior. They only try to become socialites, and with their temporary material identification they endeavor to pollute the bodies of the Vaiṣṇavas.

After the disappearance of the transcendental pastimes of Śrī Gaurāṅga deva, many *smārta* fruitive workers and mental speculators tried their best to defame the Vaiṣṇavas, but on the pretext of cooperation the *bāula*, *sahajiyā*, and *kartābhajā* communities denigrated the Vaiṣṇavas even more. There is no scarcity of such type of descendants even today. Gradually the number of such types are also increasing. The attempt to make Śrī Haridāsa Ṭhākura a *brāhmaṇa*, the endeavor to adorn Śrī Īśvara Purī as a *brāhmaṇa* or a *śūdra*, and the ability or inability of *varṇas* other than *brāhmaṇas* to impart Vaiṣṇava teachings are the aspirations of the most grossly non-Vaiṣṇava society. Such aspirations do not help to increase one's devotion, therefore these activities are not acceptable to the Vaiṣṇavas.

The artificial servitorship of conditioned souls to Kṛṣṇa is an impediment for cultivation of loving devotional service.

A Vaiṣṇava should always remember that he is not independent but a dependent servant of the servant of the lover of the *gopīs*. Mundane independence is not possible for him, because he has purchased his servitorship to Kṛṣṇa by submitting his independence in the form of surrendering to Him. If this fact remains in the path of one's memory yet the above-mentioned arguments capture the heart, then it is to be understood that he has duplicitously submitted artificial independence to Kṛṣṇa. Actually his subordination to the Lord has rather been sold to *māyā*, and he is eager to be recognized as a servant of *māyā*. A pseudo servant of Kṛṣṇa is situated far away from a Vaiṣṇava. Instead of cultivating love of God, he is simply suffering the temporary miseries born from cultivation of lust. The socialites have arranged their rules and regulations for the sake of these classes of people. (*Sajjana-toṣaṇī*, Vol. 11, Part 10)

Viprasāmya, or similarity with a brāhmaṇa

Any person initiated into Viṣṇu mantras by a bona fide spiritual master is

qualified to worship *śrī-śālagrāma-śilā*.

While ascertaining the qualification for the *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs'* worship of Lord Viṣṇu, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī Prabhu has concluded that although according to the concocted remarks of some envious *smārtas* only seminal *brāhmaṇas* are qualified to worship *śālagrāma* and uninitiated women and *śūdras* are not qualified, if a person, regardless of *varṇa*, is initiated into Viṣṇu mantras by a bona fide spiritual master, he is qualified to worship *śrī-śālagrāma*. Because according to the scriptures Vaiṣṇavas are accepted as equal to *brāhmaṇas* even in ordinary consideration. In this regard, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī Prabhu has quoted many scriptural statements in his *Dig-darśinī-ṭīkā* to prove this point. For example, he has quoted the statement of Lord Kapila from His conversation with Devahūti in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (3.33.6): “To say nothing of the spiritual advancement of persons who see the Supreme Person face to face, even a person born in a family of dog-eaters immediately becomes eligible to perform Vedic sacrifices if he once utters the holy name of the Supreme Personality of Godhead or chants about Him, hears about His pastimes, offers Him obeisances or even remembers Him.” Again, from the topics of Pṛthu Mahārāja in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (4.21.12), Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī Prabhu has quoted: “Mahārāja Pṛthu was an unrivaled king and possessed the scepter for ruling all the seven islands on the surface of the globe. No one could disobey his irrevocable orders but the saintly persons, the *brāhmaṇas* and the descendants of the Supreme Personality of Godhead [the Vaiṣṇavas].” In other words, Mahārāja Pṛthu treated the *brāhmaṇas* and Vaiṣṇavas with equal vision. Śrīla Gosvāmī Prabhu has also quoted the statement of King Puraṇjana from *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (4.26.24) as follows: “O hero's wife, kindly tell me if someone has offended you. I am prepared to give such a person punishment as long as he does not belong to the *brāhmaṇa* caste. But for the servant of Murāripu [Kṛṣṇa], I excuse no one within or beyond these three worlds. No one can freely move after offending you, for I am prepared to punish him.” In all these places the *brāhmaṇas* and the Vaiṣṇavas have been equally respected even in worldly dealings.

The explanation of the word *viprasāmya* by the less-intelligent people.

At this juncture a doubt may arise that while the procedure to show respect equally to the *brāhmaṇas* and the Vaiṣṇavas in worldly dealings is there, and the *ācāryas* have mentioned the word *viprasāmya*, and while the word *vipra* refers to the subject of comparison, the word Vaiṣṇava refers to the object being compared, so it is certainly indicated that the object being compared is inferior to the subject of comparison. For example, if we say that the face of Devadutta is like the moon, then we can understand that the face of Devadutta is not the moon, rather it has some similarity with the moon. Therefore, in beauty, the face is inferior to the moon. Considering in this way, some less-intelligent people may conclude that the word *viprasāmya* indicates that although the Vaiṣṇavas are equal to the *brāhmaṇas* in some ways, they are nevertheless inferior to the *brāhmaṇas*.

Explanation of the word *viprasāmya* by intelligent people.

But before concluding in this way, one should patiently deliberate how it has been

described everywhere that the beauty of the moon is more beautiful than a man's face. Furthermore it has always been the practice to exhibit the similarities of a more beautiful and famous object with a less beautiful and nonfamous object, and thus the beauty of the latter has been established. In this type of comparison the fault of exaggeration may often arise. But if we carefully analyze the statements of the scriptures, then we will find that the devotees of the Lord have always been established as the topmost. If we study the commentary of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī Prabhu with special attention, then we will know that a Vaiṣṇava has not been compared with a *brāhmaṇa* in the same way that a face is compared with the moon; rather the fact that a Vaiṣṇava is not inferior to a *brāhmaṇa* in any way as far as external prestige is concerned has been shown with gross external worldly considerations to envious people who are unqualified to see other's supremacy. For example when the *śāstras* explain the form of the Supreme Lord to a devotee who is attached to the opulent feature of the Lord, it conceals the most wonderfully sweet form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and depicts Him with names like Nārāyaṇa, Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, or Brahman. By this process, the complete eternal form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not indicated, yet at the same time it is not a lie to call Kṛṣṇa Kṣīrodakaśāyī or Nārāyaṇa. The knowers of the science of Kṛṣṇa understand that just as a person who possesses a million rupees also possesses a hundred rupees or a thousand rupees, or just as Brahman, Nārāyaṇa, and Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu are inseparably present in the form of Kṛṣṇa, or when Śrī Kṛṣṇa is explained as equal to Nārāyaṇa, actually Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not inferior to Nārāyaṇa, rather He is the source of Nārāyaṇa. Similarly, though a Vaiṣṇava is accepted as equal to a *brāhmaṇa* in the primary worldly consideration, yet a Vaiṣṇava is nothing less than a *brāhmaṇa*, rather he is the crest jewel on the head of the *brāhmaṇa* communities. Because a worshiper of the Supreme Lord who knows Brahman is a Vaiṣṇava. If by the word *viprasāmya* it is concluded that a Vaiṣṇava is inferior to a *brāhmaṇa* or only equal to a *brāhmaṇa*, then the behavior of *śāstras* and sadhus would not have proved opposite. When Vaiṣṇavas have been glorified thousands of times as greater than *brāhmaṇas*, then it cannot be concluded that the word *viprasāmya* means that a Vaiṣṇava is inferior or equal to a *brāhmaṇa*. Among the *brāhmaṇas* and Vaiṣṇavas, the qualities of the *brāhmaṇas* are a common factor. For example: in the numbers five and ten, the number five is present in both. Similarly brahmanism or brahminical qualities are eternally present in Vaiṣṇavas, hence the word *viprasāmya* is indicated. Had it been a fact that *brāhmaṇas* were glorified in many places in the scriptures as greater than Vaiṣṇavas, then we would have accepted the meaning of the word *viprasāmya* as being equal to the comparison of a face with the moon.

A Vaiṣṇava is always a topmost *brāhmaṇa*.

It is mentioned in the *Garuḍa Purāṇa*:

<i>brāhmaṇānām sahasrebhyaḥ</i>	<i>satra-yājī viśiṣyate</i>
<i>satra-yājī-sahasrebhyaḥ</i>	<i>sarva-vedānta-pāragah</i>
<i>sarva-vedānta-vit-koṭyā</i>	<i>viṣṇu-bhaktō viśiṣyate</i>

“It is said that out of thousands of *brāhmaṇas*, one is qualified to perform sacrifices, and out of many thousands of such qualified *brāhmaṇas* expert in sacrificial offerings, one learned *brāhmaṇa* may have passed beyond all Vedic

knowledge. Among many such *brāhmaṇas*, one who is a devotee of Lord Viṣṇu is the best.”

In *Nāradya Purāṇa* it is stated:

śvapaco 'pi mahīpāla viṣṇor bhakto dvijādhikah

“O king, a devotee of Lord Viṣṇu, though born in a dog-eater family, is higher than a *brāhmaṇa*.”

The *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* quotes the *Itihāsa-samuccaya*, wherein the Lord states:

na me 'bhaktaś catur-vedī mad-bhaktaḥ śva-pacaḥ priyaḥ
tasmai deyaṁ tato grāhyaṁ sa ca pūjyo yathā hy aham

“Even though a person is a very learned scholar of the Sanskrit Vedic literatures, he is not accepted as My devotee unless he is pure in devotional service. However, even though a person is born in a family of dog-eaters, he is very dear to Me if he is a pure devotee who has no motive to enjoy fruitive activity or mental speculation. Indeed, all respect should be given to him, and whatever he offers should be accepted. Such devotees are as worshipable as I am.” Even if the word *viprasāmya* indicated that a Vaiṣṇava should be considered equal to a *brāhmaṇa*, let alone inferior to a *brāhmaṇa*, then the Supreme Lord would have advised us to see a nondevotee *brāhmaṇa* who knows the four *Vedas* and a devotee of the Lord who is born in a dog-eater family on an equal level. Rather, He says that a devotee is nondifferent from Him, and a devotee is as worshipable as Himself; but a *brāhmaṇa* who knows the four *Vedas* is even lower than an ordinary dog-eater because he is devoid of devotion to the Lord. This is confirmed by the Lord as follows:

caṇḍālo 'pi dvija-śreṣṭho hari-bhakti-parāyaṇaḥ
hari-bhakti-vihīnaś ca dvijo 'pi śvapacādhamaḥ

“Even if one is born in the family of a *caṇḍāla*, if one engages in the devotional service of the Lord, he becomes the best of *brāhmaṇas*. But even a *brāhmaṇa* who is devoid of devotional service is on the level of the lowest dog-eater.”

**Grantha-rāja Śrīmad Bhāgavatam
establishes the supremacy of Vaiṣṇavas.**

It is stated in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (7.9.10) as follows:

viprād dvi-śaḍ-guṇa-yutād aravinda-nābha-
pādāravinda-vimukhāt śvapacaṁ variṣṭham

manye tad-arpita-mano-vacanehitārtha-
prāṇaṁ punāti sa kulaṁ na tu bhūrimānaḥ

The Vaiṣṇavas who are attached to devotional service are naturally indifferent to fruitive activities. So if according to the considerations of the materialists the word *viprasāmya* indicated that a Vaiṣṇava is inferior or equal to a *brāhmaṇa*, then the above-mentioned verse from *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* would not have described as follows: “If a *brāhmaṇa* has all twelve of the brahminical qualifications [as they are stated in the book called *Sanat-sujāta*] but is not a devotee and is averse to the lotus feet of the Lord, he is certainly lower than a devotee who is a dog-eater but who has dedicated everything—mind, words, activities, wealth and life—to the Supreme Lord. Such a devotee is better than such a *brāhmaṇa* because the devotee

can purify his whole family, whereas the so-called *brāhmaṇa* in a position of false prestige cannot purify even himself.”

Immediately after using the word *viprasāmya* in his commentary on this verse, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī Prabhu has written: *viprād dvi-ṣaḍ-guṇa-yutād ity ādi-vacanaiva-vaiṣṇava-brāhmaṇebhyo nīca-jāti-jātānām api vaiṣṇavānām śreṣṭhyam*—“it has been established by various statements such as *viprād dvi-ṣaḍ* that a low-born Vaiṣṇava is greater than a nondevotee *brāhmaṇa*.” When such clear understanding is there, then other concocted narrow opinions are understood to be in the language of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī Prabhu as *mātsarya-paraiḥ smārtaiḥ kaiścit kalpitaṃ iti mantavyam*—“the wicked imagination of some envious *smārtas*.”

**It is prohibited to consider the Vaiṣṇavas
as belonging to a particular mundane caste.**

But the word *viprasāmya* that Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī Prabhu has mentioned is only to display primary worldly considerations. In other words, one should not consider a Vaiṣṇava who is duly initiated into Viṣṇu mantras but born in a family lower than the *brāhmaṇas* in anyway inferior to a so-called *brāhmaṇa*, even by worldly considerations and mundane *kaniṣṭha-adhikāra* consideration. One cannot deprive a Vaiṣṇava from the qualifications of a *brāhmaṇa*. Because brahmanism is a common factor in a Vaiṣṇava. A person born of any family becomes a *brāhmaṇa* by the influence of Vaiṣṇava initiation, even at the stage of *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī*. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī's commentary on the *yathā kāñcanatām* verse is proof of this fact. He has given the evidence of Kapiladeva's statement that by the influence of hearing and chanting the holy names of the Lord a person born in the family of dog-eaters immediately becomes qualified to perform *soma-yajña*. But a Vaiṣṇava who is attached to the service of Kṛṣṇa does not run to perform fruitive *soma-yajña* by giving up the sacrifice of chanting the holy names. At the same time he is fully qualified to perform the *soma-yajña*. In other words, according to worldly consideration, he is not less than a *brāhmaṇa* who performs *soma-yajña*. Therefore the *ācāryas* and the *śāstras* have never said that an initiated Vaiṣṇava should be considered a dog-eater or belonging to a particular caste. By the word *viprasāmya* the caste mentality towards a Vaiṣṇava has been refuted.

**The Vaiṣṇavas are under the shelter of the holy names, therefore brahmanism is
their pre-attained right.**

Then where is the question of a Vaiṣṇava's inferiority? The word *brāhmaṇa* indicates a majority of unnecessary fruitive actions, and the word Vaiṣṇava indicates a majority of necessary devotional feelings, hence unnecessary fruitive actions are considerably less. This fact can be understood by the logic of “*br̥had-vratī* and *gr̥ha-vrata-puruṣa*.” Though a Vaiṣṇava appears in a dog-eater family, still he is not a non-*brāhmaṇa*. His brahminical qualifications are eternally perfected or previously acquired. This has been proved in the very next verse by Kapiladeva from *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (3.33.7):

*aho bata śva-paco 'to garīyān
yaj-jihvāgre vartate nāma tubhyam*

*tepus tapas te juhuvuḥ sasnur āryā
brahmānūcur nāma gr̥ṇanti ye te*

“Oh, how glorious are they whose tongues are chanting Your holy name! Even if born in the families of dog-eaters, such persons are worshipable. Persons who chant the holy name of Your Lordship must have executed all kinds of austerities and fire sacrifices and achieved all the good manners of the Āryans. To be chanting the holy name of Your Lordship, they must have bathed at holy places of pilgrimage, studied the *Vedas* and fulfilled everything required.” So when Vaiṣṇavas born in dog-eater families but engaged in chanting the holy names of the Lord possess the previously acquired brahminical qualities and are properly initiated according to the *śāstra* and are inclined towards chanting the holy names in this life, then those who want to see them in their ordinary respective castes are certainly opposing the principles of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* and are envious towards the devotees. Such people maintain animosity towards the book *Bhāgavata* and devotee *Bhāgavata* and are proceeding towards hell, while dancing frantically like demons.

Vaiṣṇava ācāryas who were born in seminal *brāhmaṇa* families refuted the atheistic philosophy of considering Vaiṣṇavas as belonging to particular castes. If the opinion of the *śāstras* were that Vaiṣṇavas born in families lower than so-called *brāhmaṇas* are inferior to the *brāhmaṇas*, and the word *viprasāmya* meant that the Vaiṣṇavas are inferior to the *brāhmaṇas*, then why doesn't the behavior of the Vaiṣṇava ācāryas support this? Did Ācārya Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura commit a great offence by accepting as disciples Śrīpāda Gaṅgānārāyaṇa Cakravartī and Śrīpāda Rāmakṛṣṇa Bhaṭṭācārya, who were born in seminal *brāhmaṇa* families? From this example of the ācārya, it is proved that the word *viprasāmya* indicates that what to speak of a Vaiṣṇava's being inferior or equal to a *brāhmaṇa*, rather he is qualified to become the spiritual master of *brāhmaṇas*. Otherwise why did Śrīla Narahari Cakravartī Ṭhākura, the author of *Bhakti-ratnākara* and a topmost Vaiṣṇava born in a *brāhmaṇa* family, write as follows:

*śrī-ṭhākura narottama patita-pāvana
tānra śiṣya cakravartī gaṅgānārāyaṇa*

*gaṅgānārāyaṇa vidyāvanta atīśaya
khaṇḍiyā `pāṣaṇḍa-mata' bhakti prakāśaya*

“Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura was a deliverer of the fallen souls. His disciple was Gaṅgānārāyaṇa Cakravartī. Gaṅgānārāyaṇa was learned scholar. He refuted atheistic philosophy and preached devotional service.” By using the word *pāṣaṇḍa-mata*, or atheistic philosophy, is it not being indicated that the envious *smārtas* are considering Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura as belonging to a particular caste? That is why Śrī Narahari Cakravartī Ṭhākura has mentioned the philosophy of the *smārtas* as “atheistic philosophy.” He has written in the *Bhakti-ratnākara*, Fifteenth Wave:

jaya jaya śrī-gaṅgānārāyaṇa cakravartī ati dhīra gambhīra

“All glories to Śrī Gaṅgānārāyaṇa Cakravartī, who is very sober and grave.”

śrīla narottama-caraṇa-saroruha-bhajana-parāyaṇa bhuvana-ujora

“By worshipping the lotus feet of Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, I will cross over material existence.”

Under the shelter of sensual perception,
the envious *smārtas* and their feet lickers,
the *sahajiyās*, glorify the darkness of hell.

Against the offensive mundane considerations of narrow-minded envious *smārtas* and their feet licking *sahajiyās* of today, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, a follower of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, instead of considering Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura as belonging to a particular caste, displayed great respect befitting an nonduplicitous disciple by composing the *Śrī Śrī Narottama Prabhor-aṣṭakam* prayers. This was not the exhibition of the pseudo respect of a *sahajiyā* nor an offensive consideration in the guise of humility that a Vaiṣṇava belongs to a particular caste. We will present with scriptural references and conclusions the behavior of the *ācāryas* in our next article. But it is also a fact that envious people who are like owls cannot tolerate the sun rays of the devotee *Bhāgavata* and book *Bhāgavata*, thus they will continue to praise the darkness of hell forever. (Weekly *Gauḍīya*, Vol. 4, Part 16)

(End of *Ācārya-santāna*)